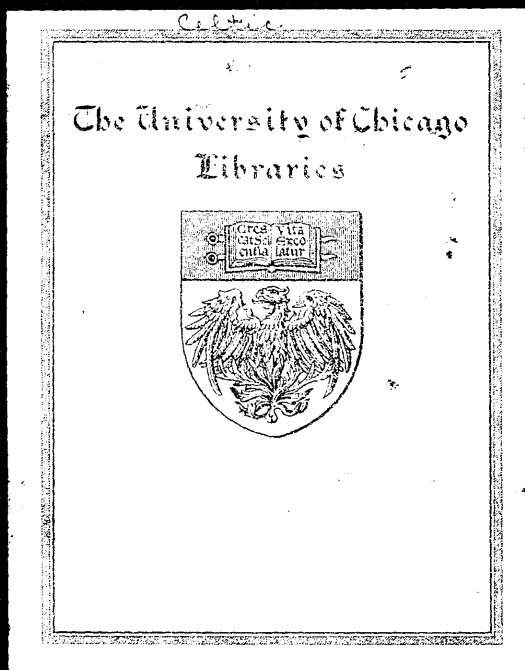


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THE
ST. CIARAN,

PATRON OF OSSORY:

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES,

COMPRISING A PRELIMINARY ENQUIRY
RESPECTING THE PERIOD OF HIS BIRTH;
AN HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE LEGEND OF HIS LIFE;
SOME NOTES ON HIS DEATH, AND ON THE SURVIVING
MEMORIALS OF HIS MISSION,

BY

JOHN HOGAN,

KILKENNY.



KILKENNY:

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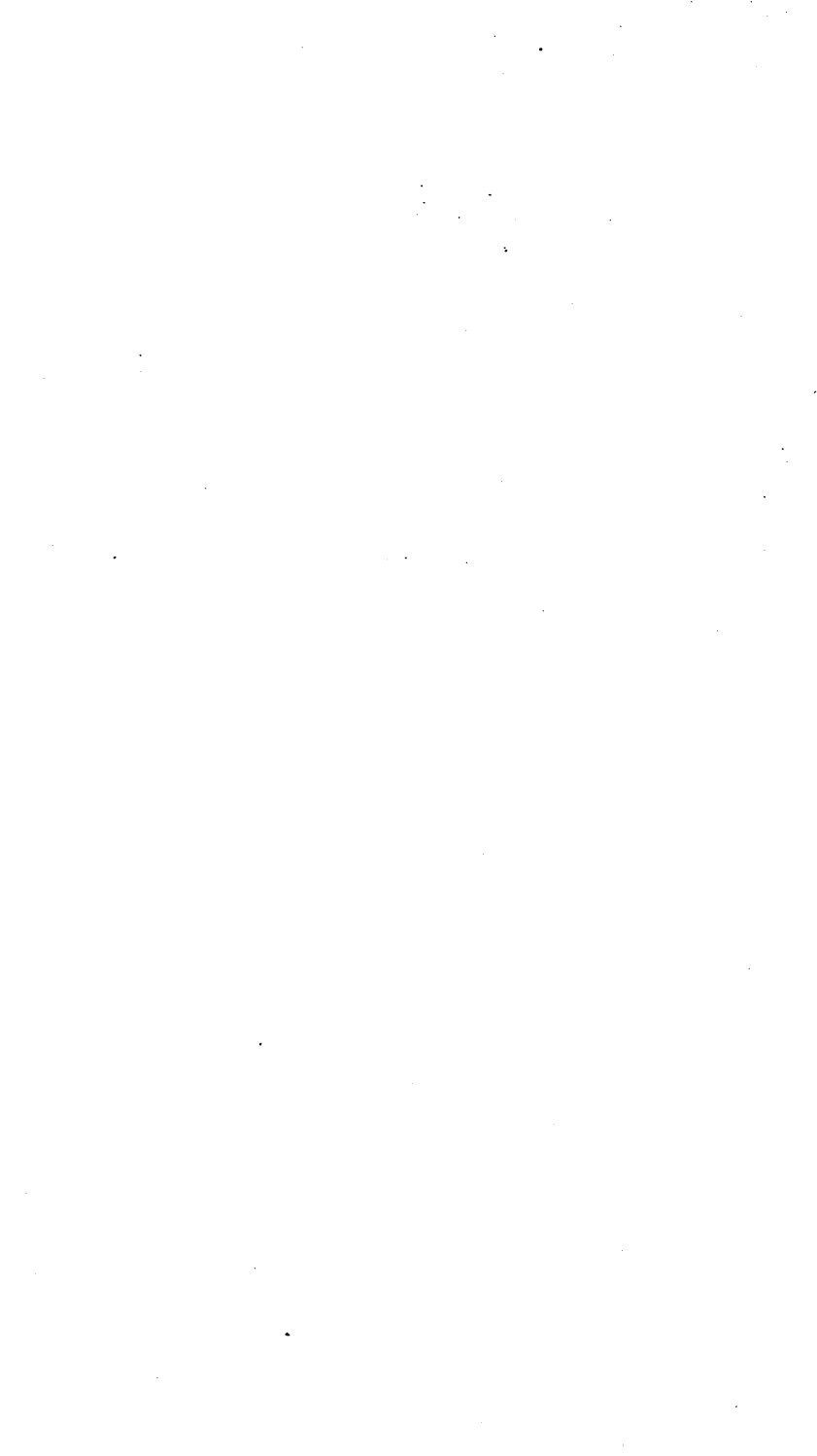
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TO
CIARAN,
"FIRST BORN OF THE SAINTS OF IRELAND,"
FOUNDER AND PATRON
OF THE
CHURCH OF OSSORY,
(The Eldest Sister of the Irish Church,)
THIS
MEMOIR
OF HIS
LIFE AND MISSION
IS
REVERENTIALLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

There are few propositions in Irish history which present so many obstacles to a direct solution as the date of the birth of St. Ciaran. Such is the complication in which that event is entangled that the early writers, who lightly adopted the chronology of the "old Life" of the saint, arrived at a period for the date of his birth so surrounded by anachronisms, and so irreconcilable with the duly authenticated facts of contemporary history, that modern students, with equal precipitancy, have rejected both the Legend and its chronology, and with them the honoured names of Ussher, Colgan, Ware, O'Flaherty, O'Donovan, &c., together with the traditions, legends, and lore of at least a thousand years in Irish literature.

It is to be regretted that the modern scholars just referred to, and to whom we are wont to appeal for guidance through the obscure paths of Irish history have, in the question now under discussion, contented themselves with rejecting the decisions of their predecessors, without leaving us some clearly-defined conclusion, as a result of their own researches, setting forth the criteria by which it was arrived at, and the arguments by which it is sustained; but instead of this each writer arbitrarily assigns a date for the missionary career of the saint which either suits some favourite foregone conclusion of his own, or fits like a "dove-tailed" joint his present purpose for some object in hands—and the result is that no two of our modern writers have agreed respecting the period of St. Ciaran's birth, or have even advanced any one date for the occurrence of that event.

In proof of what has been just stated, we give a few extracts from the writers of the present century, which will show how vague and undefined are their views respecting the date of St. Ciaran's birth, and that in rejecting what Dr. Lanigan calls "the foolish stories about Ciaran's antiquity" they themselves have not arrived at any definite conclusion, nor have they left us anything better than theories and conjectures on the point. We shall in the first place allow Dr. Lanigan to state his own case respecting the period of Ciaran's mission.

"It may be allowed," he writes, "that St. Ciaran became a bishop

about the time we are now treating of, viz., about A.D. 538. His having been at Finnian's school of Clonard can be easily reconciled with his promotion at that period, as he was one of Finnian's first scholars, and might have been twenty years old when he went to study under him."

Finnian's school, according to Ussher, was opened in 544, and as Ciaran was one of his first scholars, and was twenty years of age when he entered the school, he must have been but *fourteen years* old in A.D. 538, when he was promoted to the episcopate. Dr. Lanigan seems to have perceived that his calculations will not bear criticism, for in a foot-note on the above he writes:—"In the list of illustrious men mentioned in Finnian's Acts (cap. 19) as having studied under him the two Kierans are placed first. *"I allow,"* he adds, *"that this may not be considered as a conclusive argument,* nor do I pretend to state as certain that Ciaran was a bishop at the time above given (A.D. 538). Yet it is more than probable that he was not prior to it. But as he is not named in the second class of Irish saints who flourished after the year 544 we may suppose that he had become distinguished earlier." Ecclesiastical History, vol. 11, p. 7, note 22.

If Ciaran did not belong to the Irish saints who flourished after the year 544 he must have been, as a matter of course, distinguished before it. How then does our author say, "yet it is more than probable that he was not a bishop prior to A.D. 538?" Our present business with our learned author goes no further than to show that his system of calculation regarding the age of St. Ciaran gives us no criterion by which we can arrive at the date of the saint's birth.

Dr. Todd is the next writer in the order of time who refused to accept the ancient date assigned for the birth and mission of St. Ciaran, and it will be found that though he writes rather dogmatically against the faith in the antiquity of Ciaran's birth he signally fails in giving us anything tangible as a substitute for what he calls the apochryphal theories which he rejects.

The learned Doctor rapidly reviews the life of the saint as published by Colgan, exposes the contradictions in its chronology, the impossibility of Ciaran being born in A.D. 352, and of his being a disciple of St. Finnian's in 540, and then gives us the following conclusion as the only result of his investigations into the subject:—"We are," he says, "told indeed by the author of his Life that he was far advanced in years, and a bishop when he became the disciple of St.

Finnian, and other difficulties are obviated by the assumption that he lived to be three hundred years old. No doubt we must have recourse to some such hypothesis if we believe him to have been a disciple of St. Finnian's in A.D. 540, and a bishop in 402. But whether this hypothesis removes all difficulty is another question. The whole story of his studying at Rome, and his meeting of St. Patrick there, is as apocryphal as the prophecy of the thirty years on which the chronology of the Legend rests."

We shall show at p. 19 of the following essay that the direction said to have been given by St. Patrick to St. Ciaran on the occasion of their meeting in Italy, and generally known as the "Thirty Years' Prophecy," have been most egregiously misread by Dr. Todd. With that, however, we have nothing to do here. We are now following him only as a guide to the date of Ciaran's birth. In the passage quoted he throws no light on the point, but in a foot-note he thus illustrates the case:—"It may as well be mentioned that the genealogy of his [Ciaran's] father, Luaigre, is preserved in nine descents from his ancestor, Aengus of Ossory, who was expelled from his lands by the Desii in the reign of Cormac Ulfada (A.D. 254-277). "If this be so," he adds, "St. Ciaran's father could not be born much before the year A.D. 500." "St. Patrick," p. 202, n. 6.

That "this was not so" we shall very clearly prove at p. 26 of the following essay. But even "if this be so" it forms no criterion from which to determine, with any degree of precision, the date of St. Ciaran's birth or the age of his mission.

The next writer with whom we have to deal in connection with the age of Ciaran's mission or the date of his birth is a correspondent of the Irish Ecclesiastical Record for 1866, and who, unlike those already referred to, undertakes to prove by a tabulated pedigree that St. Ciaran was nephew to Feradach, who died King of Ossory in 582, and first cousin and contemporary to Colman, his son, who died king of the same territory in the year 601, and having, as, he asserts, established these points, he thus sums up the case:—

"I have thus proved at once that St. Ciaran and Fearadach were relatives, the latter being the uncle of the former; that they were contemporaries, and that, in fine, which was my third and last inquiry, "we may," in the words of Dr. Lanigan, "safely conclude that he—St. Ciaran--belonged to the sixth century, became distinguished

towards the middle of it, and died during its latter half." "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," October, 1866, p. 33.

With the arguments advanced by the writer we deal below, p. 29 Here it is only necessary to observe that neither they nor the conclusion which he deduces from them, and on which he so confidently relies, reflect more light on the subject than had been previously effected by the researches of Dr. Lanigan. We have just stated the case as made out by the learned Doctor himself, and as the writer in the Record unreservedly adopts it, we have only to add here that his enquiries do not help us more, than those which he adopts, to ascertain the date of St. Ciaran's birth.

The next and last writer we shall refer to in illustration of the diversity of opinion amongst modern scholars respecting the date of St. Ciaran's birth, is the Right Rev Dr. Moran, Bishop of Ossory. In the very beautiful "Inaugural Address" delivered by his Lordship before the members of the "Ossory Archæological Society," on 7th January, 1874, with that clearness and precision which characterize all his Lordship's writings, he thus states his views as the result of his researches on the subject now before us :—

"To me," his lordship says, "it seems sufficiently proved that it was through the preaching of St. Palladius that our saint [Ciaran], when he had *attained the age of manhood*, was awakened to the knowledge of Christian truth, and it seems equally certain that it was in the year 432¹ that he proceeded to Rome, and received there the saving waters of Baptism, as we read in his ancient Life : "Kieran set out for Rome of Letha, for it was made known to him by heaven that it was there he would receive Divine instruction, because Rome was the fountain of the faith. (MSS. British Museum, Egerton 91)." "Inaugural Address," p. 3. Brown and Nolan, Nassau-street, Dublin, 1874.

There is in this view of the case no vague theorising. The year 432 is plainly set down as the date of St Ciaran's departure for Rome,

¹ "In the year 432." By comparing this date, assigned by his Lordship for the departure of our saint for the Continent with the date arrived at for the same event in the following "Memoir," we find an approximation in the result of the comparison that might almost be termed a coincidence. According to Dr. Moran's calculations St. Ciaran left Ireland in the year 432, the same in which St. Patrick entered it as a missionary. According to the conclusion arrived at below p. 70, Ciaran left Ireland in the year 405, the same in which St. Patrick entered it as a captive. Between the two events a period of twenty-seven years intervenes, which in matters of such remote dates would in other cases be esteemed as of no importance.

at which date we are told he had attained the "age of manhood"—that is, according to his old Irish Life, he had then attained the thirtieth year of his age. The words of the "Old Life" are: "Thirty years Ciaran spent in the enjoyment of bodily health—and on learning of the spread of Christianity in Rome he proceeded thither and was baptized." See p. 69 below. Hence, as Ciaran was thirty years old in A.D. 432, he should be born in A.D. 402, or in the opening of the fifth century, which would be one hundred years before the date assigned for the birth of his father, Luaghre, by Dr. Todd, one hundred and forty years before the date assigned for his Episcopacy by Dr. Lanigan, and two hundred years before the death of Colman, King of Ossory, who, we are told by the writer in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, was first cousin and contemporary of St. Ciaran; and thus, notwithstanding the signal advantages which the present century has conferred on the study of Irish history, the date of the birth and mission of St. Ciaran remains as problematical at the present day as it had been before the opening of the century.

Some few years since the writer of the following essay, dissatisfied with the conflicting theories advanced respecting the date of the mission of the patron saint of Ossory, entertained the idea of investigating the subject to the extent of his opportunities, and on entering on the enquiry he soon perceived it to be entangled in a web of contradictions, caused in part by the misreading of the Legend of the saint's Life, in part by the anachronisms with which that Legend abounds, but principally by the gross errors in the pedigree of the Ossorian family, occurring between Ruman Duach, the grandfather of St. Ciaran, and Feradach, King of Ossory, in A.D. 582, which errors have so deranged the Ossorian Genealogy that subsequent writers, confounding Duach, the father of Feradach, with Ruman Duach, the grandfather of St. Ciaran, have so complicated the case, that no two of our modern scholars are agreed respecting the generation descends from Ruman Duach downwards, and from this has resulted the whole confusion in the chronology of St. Ciaran's Life. Hence, to disentangle the chronology of our saint's life from the complications in which it is involved the first step will be to correct the Ossorian pedigree, to expose its defects, and to restore the number of its missing generations.

The origin of these complications, with other important items

illustrating this remote period in Ossorian history, will be found in the pages of an authority rarely, if ever, quoted in connection with this subject, viz., "The Three Fragments of Annals," translated by O'Donovan for the "Archæological and Celtic Society," 1860, and for which see below p. 30, *n.* 2.

At his mother's side, St. Ciaran having been closely related by blood with many distinguished chieftains of Munster, we are, in consequence, enabled through the medium of collateral genealogies to arrive at him as the relative and contemporary of personages whose status in history admits of no controversy. The maternal pedigree of St. Ciaran is accurately preserved in the "Genealogy of the Corca Laighe," and through it we trace the saint to Lughaidh Mac Conn, King of Ireland, in the third century. We also find from the pedigree of King Aengus of Munster that he also descended from the same common progenitor. In pp. 11-22 below, we place the pedigrees of the king and the saint in parallel columns; the result is conclusive respecting the date of Ciaran's mission. "Part the First" of the following essay shows the process and the results of the writer's enquiries under these several heads:—

In the second part of this "memoir" the writer has endeavoured, as far as his materials enabled him, to interweave the biography of the saint as found in the Legend of his life, with the history of the age in which he lived, or in other words, to make St. Ciaran a character of his own time. It is probable that in the effort to produce an unbroken, narrative of the saint's life, by connecting it with the public acts of contemporary characters, the writer will be found occasionally to encroach on the province of conjecture. This, however, will be found only to occur by way of illustration in the treatment of the several subjects, and as many of the views advanced are not only new, but in direct antagonism with old and long cherished opinions, they will naturally be received by many, especially by conservative thinkers, with hesitation and doubt. But be this as it may, the writer holds the following points satisfactorily established:—

1st. The paternal pedigree of St. Ciaran, his maternal genealogy, and the chronology of the Legend of his Life, unite in conducting us to the year 375 as the date of his birth.

2ndly. Having attained the thirtieth year of his age he left Ireland for the Continent in A.D. 405.

3rdly. Having passed twenty years in Italy he was there intro-

duced to St. Patrick, and having attained the thirtieth year of his age the two saints separated, and Ciaran returned to Ireland in the year 425.

4thly. In thirty years from that date, or in the year 455, St Patrick visited him at his monastery at Saighir, he being then eighty years of age.

5thly. At this date Ciaran sent St. Cartach as a pilgrim to the Continent, and on his return after seven years, in A.D. 462, he committed to him the charge of his community, he himself being then eighty-seven years old.

After this date we lose sight of our saint ; and the writer cannot complain if what he advances subsequent to the return of Cartach be accepted as conjectural, as it consists only of his own views, sustained to the best of his ability, and entitled to such consideration as they may be deemed intrinsically worth.

The writer regrets with unaffected sincerity that some Celtic scholar, or one otherwise more properly qualified than himself, has not before this undertaken the investigation of the present subject. He is also perfectly conscious that the following Essay lacks both the erudition and style that ought to characterize the elucidation of such a subject. Yet he feels that this humble effort of his is a step in the right direction, that he utilises materials never before wrought into shape or form by the hand of the antiquary or historian, and that he opens a vista into a period in local history hitherto comparatively unsurveyed.

The writer desires to state here at the outset that, being a layman, he does not consider himself qualified, nor feel disposed to discuss in the following pages either dogmatic or moral polemics. The object of the enquiry solely contemplates the illustration of the life and mission of the first bishop of Ossory, and he hopes that the reverence entertained for the illustrious subject of the "Memoir" will induce the reader to overlook the numerous shortcomings with which it has been treated.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page.	Line.
39, „	114, <i>for personæ read persona.</i>
46, „	17, <i>for nDrgatt-Ros read nArgatt-Ros.</i>
46, „	30, <i>for nDrgatt-Ross read nArgatt-Ross.</i>
50, „	1, <i>for Droma read Dronadh.</i>
87, „	2 in note, <i>for luise read luisc</i> [lusk].
102, „	7, <i>for son of Aedh read son of Aedh-Coemghan.</i>
103, „	2 in 3rd col. <i>for Aedh read Blank.</i>
103, „	3 in 3rd col. <i>for Coemghan read Aedh-Coemghan.</i>
110, „	5, <i>for Cennfaladh bishop read Cennfaladh.</i>
110, „	5, <i>for Conaill read Conaill bishop.</i>
111, „	5 in note, <i>for filii Aidi, filii Coemghan read filii Aidi-Coemghan.</i>
140, „	8, <i>for Brenon law read Brehon law.</i>
185, „	5, <i>for scoria read scores.</i>
185, „	1 in note, <i>for scoria read scores.</i>

ST. CIARAN OF OSSORY :

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

The Argument.

No event in Irish History has been so unanimously affirmed by successive writers for the last thousand years as the remote antiquity claimed for the birth and missionary career of St. Ciaran, of Saighir. The ancient compiler of the "Tripartite;" the biographers of Ciaran and his cotemporary bishops, Giolla-Iosa-Mor Mac Firbisigh and Solamh O'Droma; the compilers of the books of Lecan and Ballymote; Archbishop Ussher and Father Colgan; Sir James Ware and Roderic O'Flaherty; MacGeoghegan, O'Donovan, and the other great scholars of our country—to whom we are indebted for collating and synchronising the epochs and events in Irish chronology, have recorded their concurrent testimony in favour of the pre-Patrician birth and mission of St. Ciaran. Yet, it must be conceded that two eminent modern scholars have demurred to this decision of their predecessors—Dr. Lanigan, the learned and judicious author of the "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," and Dr. Todd, the erudite and accomplished writer of the "Memoir of St. Patrick," maintain that Ciaran had been living in the middle and died towards the close of the sixth century. To these two authorities, we have now to add a third, namely—a correspondent of the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," who, in the issue of that periodical for October, 1866, signing himself B.M.C., undertakes to prove that Ciaran was first cousin to Colman, King of Ossory, who died in the year 601; and, therefore, could not have preceded St. Patrick as a missionary in Ireland.

The illustration of this subject is invested with no ordinary de-

gree of interest for us who, here in the valley of the Nore, claim for the venerable patron of this ancient principality the missionary pre-eminence of first announcing the faith within the precincts of this primitive tribe land, which now, after fifteen centuries, still honors him as the founder of its Church and the Patriarch of its civilization, whilst for ourselves, we appreciate the favoured privilege of being enabled to “adore in the place where his feet have stood.” But we must not allow our sentimentalism to beguile our judgment, nor are we to accept as evidence in the case aught which cannot stand the test of critical and historical analysis. We shall, therefore, divide the inquiry into three distinct parts. In the first we shall submit the proofs on which we claim for Ciaran a pre-Patrician career; and dispassionately examine the arguments that have been advanced to disprove it. The second part will consist of an historical commentary on the legend of the Saint’s life, in which we shall arrange, into chronological order, its principal events, and illustrate from it much of the present ecclesiastical topography of the county of Kilkenny. The third part will consist of a list or catalogue of the still surviving memorials of his mission, with some short illustration of each.

PART THE FIRST.

RESPECTING THE PERIOD OF ST. CIARAN’S BIRTH.

The proofs to be submitted in support of the pre-Patrician birth of St. Ciaran, will be discussed under the four following heads, viz. :—

1st. The pedigree of his father from Aengus, the first King of Ossory.

2nd. His maternal genealogy from Lughaidh MacConn.

3rd. The testimony of the “Barcon Chiaran,” and the chronology of the legend of his life.

4th. His relationship with Aengus MacNadhfrach.

CHAPTER I.

PATERNAL GENEALOGY OF ST. CIARAN.

In the legend of his life,¹ Ciaran is said to have been "of the nobility of Ossory." In the Martyrology of Donegal,² he is said to be of "the race of Aengus Osraighe;" and the Scholiast³ on the *Feliere* of Aengus, at the 5th March, asserts—"Do dal Birnd do Osraighe do Chiaran," i.e., "Of the Dal Birn of Ossory, was Ciaran," which confines him to the Royal family of the Ossorian tribe—for the Dal Birn was the tribe name of the MacGillaphadraig Clan, and came originally from Leoghaire Birn, the second King of Ossory. In the Sanctilogium Geneal,⁴ found in the Book of Lecan and in the pedigree of Ciaran, preserved in the Book of Leinster, we have the direct descents from Aengus Ossory, through his successors, to Lughaidh or Luaghe, the father of Ciaran, which determines, with certainty, the tribe and the territory of Ciaran's ancestry. In each of the authorities now quoted Lughaidh, the father of Ciaran, stands the ninth in descent from Aengus Ossory, the head of the race. Genealogists are agreed in allowing thirty years as an average for each generative descent. Hence nine descents, at thirty years to each, will bring us from Aengus Ossory to Lughaidh, when the latter was 30 years old, at 270 years after the death of Aengus; and here, in consequence, arises the necessity of ascertaining the age in which Aengus lived, and thus, at the very opening of our enquiry, we find ourselves obliged to turn aside from the life of the first Bishop to that of the first King of Ossory.

PEDIGREE OF AENGUS OSRAIGHE.—Aengus was the founder of the

¹ "Legend of his life." For an account of this manuscript see below chapter iii.

² "Martyrology of Donegal." At the 5th of March.

³ "Scholiast," i.e., Cathal Maguire, quoted from Hennessy's copy of the *Feliere Aengus*.

⁴ "Sanctilogium Geneal." The *Sanctilogium Genealogicum* here referred to in Colgan is frequently quoted by writers on Irish hagiology under the title of *Seanchus na Naomh*, and *Naomh Seanchus*, which are variously translated, "The Genealogy of the Saints," "The Saint History," "Sacred Genealogies," &c. There is a copy of the work preserved in the Book of Lecan, and is often quoted by Michael O'Clery in the Martyrology of Donegal. See Dr. Todd's observations on this ancient MS. in his annotations to O'Clery's calendar.

ancient Kingdom of Ossory, the original establishment of which dates from the "battle of Raighne," fought in the reign of Elim MacConry, Monarch of Ireland, in the first century. In this battle the Prince of Magh Feimhin was slain, his territory of Feimhin seized on and united to Raighne, which two districts united to Magh-Airget-Ros, formed the original Kingdom of Ossory.¹ The battle of Raighne was fought between the years 59 and 79 of the first century, and though it is but meagerly recorded,² and apparently involved in much obscurity, many authorities concur in conducting us to Aengus in the prime of his career at the period of this battle. We shall now submit the proofs by which we have arrived at this conclusion.

Bresal Breac was the common ancestor of both the Lagenians and Ossorians. According to Keating³ the two races branched off from Bresal fourteen generations before Cathair Mor, and only eleven before Aengus Ossory, whence it follows that Aengus must have been living three generations before Cathair Mor. The following table shows the relative descents of Cathair and Aengus from their common ancestor Bresal Breac. The third column gives the maternal genealogy of Aengus Ossory from Aengus Tuirmeac, for the illustration of which see below p. 8. The Chronological column descends from the death of Aengus Tuirmeac, who, according to the Ogygia, died in A.M. 3819,⁴ and descending thence at the rate of 30 years to a generation,⁵ we

¹ For an account of the extent and boundaries of the original Ossory, see below, part second, chapter 1.

² "Recorded" Ogygia, vol. 2, page 192. Healy's translation, Dublin, 1793.

³ Keatinge's History of Ireland, vol 1; page 82, Carson's Edition Dublin, MDCCXXIII.

⁴ "Ogygia," vol. II., p. 140.

⁵ "Generation." In the ordinary course of nature, thirty years will be found faithfully to represent the average of each generative descent. But this rule cannot be tested by the statistics of civil succession, to which it cannot be at all applied. A reverend friend of the writer has, with the most commendable industry, collected from various sources his own family pedigree, in an unbroken succession for the past two hundred years. We have recently tested its accuracy by applying to it the rule of thirty years to a generation with the following results. The head of the pedigree, John, was born in 1694, and descending from him, when he was 30 years of age, in 1724, we have six descents, which at 30 years to each, make 180 years, which being added to 1724, bring us to the sixth descent, when he would be thirty years old in 1904. John, the sixth descent, was born in 1873, and will be thirty years of age in 1903, only one year different in date from that which the average descents in the pedigree have given us. Of course, conclusions arrived at from genealogical data can be accepted only as approximations, and will be often found some years either over or under the expected result. There are few of the pedigrees in Irish history will stand the test of the thirty years' rule. Those that will are certainly correct.

find ourselves, after eleven descents, at A.D. 145, which represents the reign of Cathair Mor in the middle of his career, which, according to all our authorities, is chronologically correct:—

Bresal Breac ₁			
1	Lughaidh Lothfin,	Connla,	
2	Sedna.	Nuadh,	Aengus Tuirmeac A.M. 3819
3	Nuadh Nect.	Cartach,	Eithne „ 3840
4	Fergus Fairge,	Labraidh,	Fearmar „ 3870
5	Rossa Ruadh,	Lughaidh,	Oiliol „ 3900
6	Finn the Poet,	Oiliol,	Suin „ 3930
7	Conchobhar Abhraruadh,	Sedna,	Degadh „ 3960
8	Magh Corb,	Iar,	Daire „ 3990
9	Cucorb,	Crimthan Mor,	Cingit A.D. 25
10	Nia Corb,	Aengus Osraighe,	„ 55
11	Cormac Gealta Goith,	Leoghairc Birn,	„ 85
12	Felmidh Firnghlais,	Head of the “Dal Birn” Of Ossory,	„ 115
13	Cathair Mor,		„ 145

According to this table, Aengus Ossory lived three generations before Cathair Mor. Cathair was slain by Conn of the Hundred

“Bresal Breac.” There is no direct reference to the age in which this chieftain flourished. O’Flaherty, in the *Ogygia*, says he was the grandson of Crimthan-Cosgrach, who was slain A.M. 3845, or 150 years before the Christian era. His words are “King Crimthan had by his son, Bresal Brec, three grandsons, viz., Lugad Loitfionn, the grandfather of Nuad the White, King of Ireland; Feargus, the sailor, from whom the kings of Leinster are descended, and Conla, the progenitor of the Ossorians, from whom the family of the Fitzpatrick, barons of Upper Ossory, derive their genealogy.” *Ogygia*, page 140. But Keatinge’s pedigree makes Bresal Breac not the son of Crimthan Cosgrach, but of Fiachadh Faobhrice, the eighth in descent from the same Crimthan, in which he is sustained by the high authority of the late eminent Irish scholar, O’Donovan. The chronological column descends from A.M. 3819, the date of Aengus Tuirmeac’s death, to A.D. 145, which represents Cathair Mor as being then thirty years of age, which is also singularly correct. Our authorities do not agree in their various chronological arrangement of the events of this remote period. It is no business of mine to attempt either to correct or reconcile them. In the above and following tables, I have followed O’Flaherty’s chronology, and I do so because I find that a high authority in Irish history, Dr. Todd, has set me the example. See Chronological table of the Kings of Ireland, “St. Patrick,” page 256.

Battles in A.D. 177,¹ three generations before which, at 30 years to each, bring us up to Aengus at the year 87, or about the close of the first century, when he would be far advanced in life. In the table, Aengus stands opposite the year 55, of the first century, at which date the pedigree represents him as being then thirty years old, and if he lived to be fifty years more, would attain the eightieth year of his age in A.D. 105, which we shall here adopt as the date of his death; and in support of that conclusion, submit the following evidence:—

THE WILL OF CATHAIR MOR.—Cathair Mor—one of the most distinguished Chieftains of ancient Ireland, has left behind him a deed purporting to be his “Will,” and of which three different versions are preserved, viz.—one embodied in the “Book of Rights;” one preserved in the Ogygia; and a third found in the handwriting of Michael O’Clery, and published with a translation by Dr. Todd, in his “Appendix to the Introduction to the Martyrology of Donegal.” A word of illustration will be required for each.

The Will of Cathair Mor, found in the “Book of Rights,” like every other tract in the same ancient compilation, is but a metrical amplification of a more simple and primitive deed which, like the writings of St. Benean, had been specially modified by the Munster bards to suit the political designs of the Cashel statesmen during the reign of Cormac MacCuilleanan, and consequently the date of this version of the Will must be coeval with that of the compilation of the “Book of Rights” in its present form.²

Respecting the copy of the “Will” preserved by O’Flaherty, it will suffice to notice it in the words of Dr. O’Donovan³—“This Will,” he writes, “has been noticed by O’Flaherty in the Ogygia, where he gives a short account of it, from which it appears that the document he used was different from our text (*i.e.*, from the Book of Rights). But he does not inform us where it is preserved, or whether he believed it was an authentic document. He merely remarks, “Thus I find the will of Cathair has been committed to writing.” O’Clery’s version of the “Will” differs but slightly in substance from O’Flaherty’s, and of it Dr. Todd gives this account:⁴ “In the margin (of O’Clery’s MS.) is

¹ Ogygia, vol ii., page 207.

² “Form.” See O’Donovan’s learned criticism on this subject. Introduction to the “Book of Rights,” page xxxiii. et seq.

³ Dr. O’Donovan, Book of Rights, page 192, n. a.

⁴ “This account.” Appendix to the introduction to the Martyrology of Donegal, page xxxiv., et seq.

the note "*Testamentum Cathairi magni regis Hiberniæ.*" This is evidently," continues Todd, "the Irish authority followed by O'Flaherty which Dr. O'Donovan says he could not find." Thus, we have but two versions or texts of Cathair's will, viz. :—one in the Book of Rights, which O'Donovan shows to be but a compilation of the end of the ninth century, and that in the handwriting of Michael O'Clery, which, according to Dr. Todd, was the Irish authority followed by O'Flaherty, and which, from its simple and primitive construction, as well as from its having come to us through the hands of two of the most trustworthy witnesses in Irish history, goes far in favour of its being a copy or transcript of the original deed, which "Sealbach, the sage," and "Aengus, the wise," the two secretaries of Cormac MacCuilleanan, amplified for their master's use, whence it found its way into the Book of Rights¹ Now from Dr. Todd's translation of O'Clery's copy of this ancient bequest, we take the following extract :—

"He (Cathair Mor), also gave to Nia Corb—son of Leoghaire—Bern mBuadh, son of Aengus of Ossory, one hundred white-speckled cows with red ears, and a heifer calf with every two cows, besides various gifts—with the right to give advice to the power of the province of Laighin."

This last clause is thus translated in the Ogygia, "With authority to be prime minister to the King of Leinster." This passage is decisive² respecting the age in which Aengus Ossory lived, and amply

¹ "Book of Rights." O'Donovan observes that the will of Cathair Mor has no apparent connection with the Book of Rights, save that as the principal tribes of Leinster descended from the sons of Cathair, and that the rights and stipends of those descendants are there treated of. But the entire of that ancient MS. consists of older MSS., transcribed and modified to suit the ambitious policy of the royal ecclesiastic who then ruled in Cashel.

² "Decisive." It may be objected that, as the clause in favour of Nia Corb is not found in the copy of Cathair's will preserved in the Book of Rights, that it does not exist in the original, and that, therefore, O'Clery's version of the will must be an interpolated copy. But the answer to this will be accepted as conclusive by every student of Irish history, who has made himself acquainted with the rival claims so constantly advanced by the Lagenians and Mumomians for the annexation of Ossory to their respective territories. Cathair Mor, by this bequest in favor of Nia Corb, recognised Ossory as a dependent province of Leinster, and its king as chief minister at his court. Cormac MacCuilleanan, on the other hand insists on Ossory being subject to Munster, as is thus declared by his bards :

"Subject to his (the king of Munster's) rights, therefore,

Are the beauteous tribe of the Osraidhe."

—*Book of Rights.*

And hence his secretaries, in modifying the will of Cathair Mor, designedly ignored or expunged the bequest to Nia Corb, as on it might be established a right on the part of the King of Leinster to authority over the territory of Ossory. And thus, the very objection which may be raised against O'Clery's copy of the will, is the strongest and most convincing proof in favour of its authenticity.

sustains the genealogies quoted at page 5, above, in making Aengus precede Cathair by three generations, which, at thirty years to each, bring us back to the end of the first century, when we find Aengus far advanced in his career; and this we shall now demonstrate still more clearly from his maternal genealogy.

MATERNAL GENEALOGY OF AENGUS OSRAIGHE.—The pedigree of Cingit, or Kingit, the mother of Aengus is given above at page 5, and as that has been its first appearance in a tabulated form, it will be necessary to supplement it here by a short historical notice. Aengus Tuirmeac was monarch of Ireland from A.M. 3787 to 3819, and had, when overcome with wine, by his own daughter, a son born to him, the recollection of which so overpowered him with shame, that he subsequently received the surname of Tuirmeac, or bashful; and, believing the offspring of such unlawful intercourse unworthy of life, ordered the child, soon after its birth, to be taken from its mother, and together with some trinkets of royalty, to be placed in a boat and committed to the mercy of the waves. The boat having been discovered by some fishermen, who concluded, from the presence of the jewellery, that the child had been of royal extraction, had it carefully nurtured, till it finally grew up a character of some distinction, and is known in history as Fiachadh Fearmar, or the Sailor.¹ He had a son named Oilliol Aron, who makes some figure in the war tales of his time, and he again had a son named Suin, by other writers, Sen.² He was the father of Degadh, and both father and son were expelled from Ulster for intriguing against the government of that kingdom, about a century before the Christian era. They fled to Munster, and were there protected by Duach, then King of that province, from which circumstance this chieftain was subsequently surnamed Duach daltha Deagha, viz.:—Duach, the fosterer or protector of Deagha. Duach subsequently became monarch of Ireland, and Deagha succeeded him as King of West Munster, and gave name to the celebrated *Clan-Deaghadh*, a warlike tribe of that Kingdom, at the opening of the Christian era. Deaghadh was succeeded by his son Daire, who, from his martial exploits, was surnamed the “plunderer,” and from him

¹ “The Sailor.” See Keating, vol. 1, p. 84. In the Ogygia, Fiachaidh Fearmar is denominated Fiach the Sailor. Fearmar appears to be formed of fear, (*vir* Latin), a man and mar, the sea, *i.e.*, the man of the sea, or the seaman. Ogygia, vol. 2, page 142.

² Ogygia, vol. 2, p. 142.

was born Cingit or Kingit, who, becoming the wife of Crimthan Mor, of the race of Conula, gave birth to Aengus, the head of the Ossorian family. Aengus Ossory stands the eight in descent from Aengus Tuirmeac, and eight descents from A.M., 3819. The date of Aengus Tuirmeac's death bring us to A.M. 4059, agreeing with the year 55 of the first century, at which date, according to the rule of 30 years to a generation, Aengus Ossory would be 30 years of age, and would, in consequence, be born about the year 25 of the first century, and if he lived to be eighty years of age, would die in A.D. 105. We have now to see how far this conclusion can be sustained by more direct authorities. The following bears directly on the point, and is taken from Kennedy's "Dissertation¹ of the Royal Family of the Stuarts," printed at Paris, A.D., 1703.

"Daire, above-mentioned, had, by his wife, Cal'd Maoin Mananagh, a son, by name Cury, much celebrated in the Irish Books for his valour and prodigious strength; he was Prince or Chief over one of the three tribes of famous Warriors then in Ireland, and was King of West Munster; and had [*i.e.* Daire had] a daughter called Kingit, the wife of Ængus Ossory; from whose nickname the Patrimony this Ængus acquired for his posterity, has been ever since called Ossery. This Cury was, by all our monuments of antiquity, contemporary to Connor, King of Ulster."

According to the Ogygia,² this King Connor

"Ruled the Sceptre of Ulster for sixty years, and died a natural death in the forty-eighth year of Christ."

The argument of these passages amounts to this—Cingit, the mother of Aengus Ossory, was daughter to Daire macDegadh, and sister to Cury macDaire, and as "this Cury was by all our monuments of antiquity," contemporary with Connor, King of Ulster, who died

¹ "Dissertation of the Royal Family of the Stuarts," p. 71. A rare and valuable old book, bearing among other testimonials, the following:

"Dominicke, by the grace of God, and Holy See, Apostolic Archbishop of Ardmagh, primate and metropolitan of Ireland. To all those whom it may concern, greeting, &c." "We certify that we have seriously and attentively read an English manuscript intitled a Chronological, Genealogical, and Historical Dissertation of the Royal Family of the Stuarts, writ by Dr. Matthew Kennedy, wherein we find a rare collection of curious antiquity, out of choice Irish monuments, which may prove very useful towards compiling the general History of Ireland. We also find his arguments and remarks solidly grounded, all tending to the clearing of the Royal family's unparalleled antiquity, and, therefore, very fit to be published. Dated at St. Germain's, the first day of June, 1704.

Signed † DOMINICKE, Archbishop of Ardmagh and Primate of all Ireland."

² Ogygia, vol. 2, page 163.

in the year 48 of the first century, Cingit, the mother of Aengus Ossory, and the sister of Cury, must have been living within the first half of the first century of our era; and further evidence in favour of this conclusion is afforded by a tract respecting famous women, preserved in the Book of Lecan¹ pp. 148-9, from which we take this short extract: "*Cingit ingin Daire mic Degaid Mathair Aengusa Osraidt, mic Crimthain Moir,*" i.e. "Cingit, daughter of Daire MacDegadh, mother of Aengus Ossory, the son of Crimthan Mor."

And in folio 98, c. 1 of the same venerable authority, the following note occurs:—

Crimthan apud quem fuit Cingit ingen Daire Maic Degaid Mather Aengusa Osraighe. i.e., "Itir Ossu allta do fric a quo Osraidt," "Crimthan was found with Cingit, daughter of Daire, son of Degaidh, mother of Aengus Osraighe, i.e., "Between wild deer he was found, from whom the Osraighe."

Degaid or Degadh, named in the both passages was, as already seen, the ancestor of the *Clan Degadh*. Daire, his son, is equally famous, being one of the most celebrated heroes of his age, he was father of the renowned Cury or Curoi MacDaire, and of Cingit, who was married to Crimthan Mor, and by whom she became the mother of Aengus Ossory. According to the *Ogygia*,² Curoi or Cury fought in single combat with Cuchuland, the celebrated leader of the "Red Branch Knights" who, according to the same authority,³ was twenty-five years old at the commencement of the Christian era, which thus fixes the age of his competitor; for we must allow the duellists to have been of nearly the same age. Hence, if Cury was twenty-five years old at the opening of the first century, his sister Cingit should be something near the same age, probably much younger, for her son Aengus was living till the close of the first century. He was most probably born about the year A.D. 25, and if he lived to be eighty years old would die about the year 105 of the Christian era. This conclusion is still further sustained by the learned editor of the "*Chronicum Scotorum*," who

¹ "Book of Lecan." For this and the following passage from the same venerable MS., I am indebted to the kindness of M. W. Hennessy, Esq., Public Record Office, Dublin.

² *Ogygia*, vol. 2, page 159. "Curoi MacDaire was killed by the celebrated champion, Cuchuland, about the first year of the Christian era." *Materials of ancient Irish history*, by Eugene Curry, Esq., page 274.

³ "Authority."—*Ogygia*, vol. 2, page 161.

in a letter recently received from him on the point now under discussion says :—"In all the authorities that I know Aengus Ossory is made the contemporary of characters, whose periods are referred to A.D. 70—150, so that he may be safely fixed about the year 110," which is only five years later than the date to which the genealogy of his ancestors has already conducted us. Adopting then A.D. 105 as the date of Aengus Ossory's death, we shall now descend from him, through his successors, till we arrive at the period of Ciaran's birth, allowing, according to the rule, 30 years as the average of each generative descent.

The following table exhibits the paternal pedigree of Ciaran from his ancestor, Aengus Ossory, also his maternal genealogy from Lughaidh MacConn, and the collateral descents of Aengus Mac Nadhfrach, from the same chieftain. Our present enquiry is confined to Ciaran's paternal pedigree. For his maternal genealogy, see below, page 13, and for that of King Aengus see Chap. 4.

	Aengus Osraighe,		A.D. 105
1	Leoghaire Birn,		„ 135
2	Amalgaidh,		„ 165
3	Eochaid Landoitt,		„ 195
4	Buan Osraighe,		„ 225
5	Nia Corb,	Lughaidh Mac Conn, R.H.	„ 255
6	Cairbre Caem,	Maicnaidh,	„ 285
7	Conaill,	Aengus Bolg,	„ 315
8	Ruman Duach,	Maine Cherr,	„ 345
9	Luighaidh	Liedania,	„ 375
10	St. Ciaran, Bishop of Saighir.	Abinda, Nadhfrach, Aengus, King of Munster.	„ 405

The first date in the chronological column represents the death of Aengus, A.D. 105, at which date his son, No. 1 in the pedigree, was 30 years old, and his grandson, No. 2, had been then just born. Hence the date opposite each descent represents the individual as being then thirty years of age, and also the date of the birth of the succeeding generation, consequently Lughaidh, the ninth descent was 30 years A.D. 375, which same date is fixed by the chronology of this pedigree to be

that of the birth of his son Ciaran. It is freely granted that conclusions arrived at from genealogical data can be accepted but as so many approximations. In the present case, however, it will be found that by a singular concurrence, both the maternal genealogy of Ciaran, and the chronology of the legend of his life unite in conducting us to this same year A.D. 375, as the date of his birth.

CHAPTER II.

MATERNAL GENEALOGY OF ST. CIARAN.

In the legend of Ciaran's life it is stated "The name of his mother was Liadhan, and she was a native of Corca Laighe." There are few events in Irish history the date of which can be approached with greater precision than that of Ciaran's birth, through the medium of his maternal pedigree. The Corca Laighe, to which she belonged, was the parent trunk of many wide-spreading branches. Its great progenitor was Lughaidh Mac Conn, a distinguished chieftain of the third century. Two copies of the genealogy of the Corca Laighe are in existence—one in the Book of Lecan, compiled from older MSS. by Giolla-Iosa-Mor Mac Firbisigh, in the year 1418. The other preserved in the "Book of Ballymote," compiled by Solamh O'Droma, from older MSS. about the year 1390. The genealogy was transcribed by the late Dr. O'Donovan for the Celtic Society, which, with a translation by the same scholar, have been published in the Miscellany of that Society for the year 1849. As the original text, with O'Donovan's translation and notes, may be consulted by any student in Irish history, the following extract will suffice for our purpose:—

"Lughaidh Laidhe, from whom the Corca Laidhe———
 He had a son, another Lughaidh, *i.e.*, Mac Conn———
 Mac Conn had a celebrated son namely Maicniadh.
 Maicniadh had good sons, namely Aenghus Gaifuileach———
 From whom [descends] Ua Eidersceoil (O'Driscoll)———

[The writer here turns off from the direct descents in pursuit of the Ua Cobtaigh (O'Coffey's); Ua Floin (O'Flinn's), &c., and again takes up the old line in p. 19].

Aengus had four sons, Maine, Natha, Oilill, &c.

Maine, son of Aengus, had two sons, namely Eana and Cathra,
 And one daughter *i.e.*, Lighain, daughter of Maine, who was the
 Mother of Ciaran, of Saighir. He was born at Finntract-Clere.
 And the angels of God attended upon her. The orders of Heaven
 Baptised him. Here was (dwelling) the chieftain who first believed
 In the Cross in Ireland; for Ciaran had taken Saighir
 Thirty years before Patrick arrived, as the poet said.

Saighir the cold,
 Found a city on its brink,
 At the end of thirty years
 I shall meet there and thou."

Denuding the pedigree of its genealogical ramifications, the direct descents from Mac Conn to Ciaran stand thus:—

1 Lughaidh Mac Conn	...	A.D. 255
2 Maicnaidh	...	„ 285
3 Aengus Gaifuileach (alias Bolg)	...	„ 315
4 Maine Cherr	...	„ 345
5 Lighain	...	„ 375
6 Ciaran	...	„

The chronology of this pedigree gives us the following results:—
Lughaidh Mac Conn was monarch of Ireland from A.D. 250 to 253.¹
Lighain, or Liedania, Ciaran's mother, is the fourth in descent from Mac Conn. Four descents at 30 years to each, make 120 years, which, added to A.D. 253, the date of Mac Conn's death, bring us to Lighain, the mother of Ciaran, at A.D. 373, when she would be thirty years of age, and when her son Ciaran would be just making his appearance on the scene of life, and the sequence of the extract confirms the accuracy of this conclusion, “for (continues the writer) “Ciaran had taken Saighir thirty years before Patrick arrived,” that is, before he arrived at Saighir, not before he arrived in Ireland; and this is precisely the import of the *ran* which the writer then quotes from an older authority:—

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We shall see below at Chap. III. that St. Patrick visited St. Ciaran at Saighir in A.D. 455; and as at that period Ciaran was eighty years of age he should, in consequence, have been born in the year A.D. 375, the same date as we have arrived at through the medium of his father's pedigree.

¹ “253,” Ogygia, vol. ii., p. 226.

CHAPTER III.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE "BARCON CIARAN"—THE AUTHOR AND THE DATE OF THE LEGEND OF ST. CIARAN'S LIFE.—THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE LEGEND ILLUSTRATED.

The "Old Life" of Ciaran, as it is sometimes termed, has been accepted as a very ancient compilation, and was held in great esteem by Ussher. Of this old MS. there appears to have been many copies on transcripts extant. Colgan translated one into Latin; it is published in the *Acta SS.* at the 5th March; another copy of it fell into the hands of an Irish scholar named John Murphy, of Carrignaver, county Cork, by whom more than one transcript was made in A.D., 1758. One of Murphy's copies is now preserved in the Royal Irish Academy (M.S. 23, M. 50). There is a second in the possession of Mr. John O'Daly, Anglesea-street, Dublin, who has made from it an English translation, which I am enabled to make use of in the following essay. Murphy's transcript is not divided into chapters. It consists of fifty-eight paragraphs, which do not, however, represent so many different subjects in the legend. But, as we have no other rule for reference, we shall use these paragraphs as chapters in the sequel of this Memoir. As the "Life" of Ciaran is the most decisive authority in favour of the remote antiquity of his birth and mission, it will be necessary to introduce its testimony by a short enquiry respecting the period of its compilation.

In the third chapter or paragraph of the legend, we are introduced to St. Ciaran, who, on his return from Rome, met St. Patrick in Italy. The latter presented Ciaran with a bell and the writer of the life gives the following account of this bell in his own times:—

"Barcon Ciaran is the name of the bell, and it is now deposited as a sacred relic in the parish and city of St. Ciaran, and taken around the country in order that contending kings and princes should be sworn by it, to keep fealty towards each other. It is also sworn on when necessary by the Coarbhs of St. Ciaran's monastery and by the public in general. It was made by Germanus, bishop at St. Patrick's monastery, and it was he (i.e., Germanus), that gave it to St. Patrick."

The history of the "Barcon Ciaran," given in this passage, is important as a testimony never before cited in support of the Roman journey of St. Ciaran, or rather in support of the antiquity of the

belief in that journey to the Continent. We learn from the Irish Annals that this bell was of great reputation in ancient Ireland. In the *Chronicum Scotorum* we read—

“A.D. 972—Donnchadh Finn, son of Aedh, son of Flann, was slain by Aedh, against the protection of the *Bearnan Ciaran*, through treachery.”

It will be observed that in the extract quoted from the Life of Ciaran, the bell is denominated “Barcon Ciaran;” and in the passage from the *Chronicum*, it is called “*Bearnan Ciaran*.” The cause of the change in the name of the bell will be enquired into lower down. At the year 1041 we read again in the “*Chronicum*”—

“The community of Ciaran fasted at Tula Garbha against Aedh Ua Confiaccla dynast of Teabhtha, and the *Bearnan Ciarain* was rung against him there with the end of the Bachal-Isa; and the place moreover where he turned his back upon the Clergy. In that same place his head was cut off before the end of a month by the men of Midhe” (Meath).

The Bachal Isa, or, as it is translated, the Staff of Jesus, had been St. Patrick’s Crozier, which, on this occasion, was brought from Armagh to Meath, that, by tolling with it St. Ciaran’s bell, the excommunication then pronounced against Aedh or Hugh O’Confiaccla, might be more solemn and imposing. From all which we can learn, the extent of the religious esteem with which this bell was regarded by the Ecclesiastics and Chieftains of the nation. It was preserved with sacred care in the city or *cathair* of St. Ciaran, from the time of the saint himself down to the eleventh century, if not to a later date. It was a sacred relic, highly venerated in the Church, and derived its reputation from its connection with the school of St. Germanus, in which St. Patrick had completed his studies, and, as such, is the highest proof that can be required of the antiquity of the belief of the Roman journey of St. Ciaran, and of his interview with St. Patrick on the Continent. That belief must be as old as the existence of the bell, and consequently as old as the time of St. Ciaran himself; and, as such, this bell may be accepted as an illustrious memorial of the general belief of the ancient Irish Church in the pre-Patrician birth and mission of St. Ciaran.

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That the alteration in the name of the bell resulted from its having been gapped or broken in one of these predatory raids or internecine feuds in which the native Irish soon learned to imitate, if not to excel, the sacrilegious examples of their ruthless invaders, the Danes, is all but certain. In the year 842 "Bir and Saighir were plundered by the Gentiles." This was a raid by a detachment of Danes from their fleet then mooring in the waters of Linn Ros, an arm of the Shannon. We have not the details of this assault, nor of the extent or nature of its violence; but in a century later we read in the same Annals, A.D. 952, "Saighir Chiaran was plundered by the men of Munster." We can form an idea of the violence of this assault on Saighir, from the circumstance that twenty years after its date the place still remained desolate and dilapidated; so much so that Sabdh or Sabia, the daughter of Donnchadh, King of Ossory, and wife of Donnchadh, Monarch of Ireland, expressed her grief on beholding the cemetery of Saighir, in which reposed the ashes of many of her ancestors, now an unprotected common, without even a wall or *fosse* to save it from indiscriminate desecration.¹ And in the year 973 she

¹ Desecration. This important event is found recorded in an extract from a latin translation of Dr. Keating's History of Ireland, preserved in the Manuscript Library, Trinity College, Dublin, transcribed by the late Dr. O'Donovan, published for the first time, by the Rev. James Graves, in the "History, Antiquities, and Architecture of the Cathedral church of St. Canice, page 9, n.b. In

Denuding the pedigree of its genealogical ramifications, the direct descents from Mac Conn to Ciaran stand thus:—

1 Lughaidh Mac Conn	...	A.D. 255
2 Maicnaidh	...	„ 285
3 Aengus Gaifuileach (alias Bolg)	...	„ 315
4 Maine Cherr	...	„ 345
5 Lighain	...	„ 375
6 Ciaran	...	„

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procured masons out of Meath to erect around the sacred precincts the *septum* or wall,¹ part of which is still standing there. One year before the erection of this wall, and twenty years after the demolition of the town by the "Men of Munster," we find the *Chronicum Scotorum* designating Ciaran's bell by the name of "Bearnan," that is gapped or broken. Was it then in the year 952, when Saighir was sacked by the Munster men, that, in demolishing the *cathair* and other buildings of the town, they gapped this venerated relic of the founder? It is certain that the bell was injured anterior to the year 952; and it is also certain that the *Life* of Ciaran had been written before that injury had occurred. But the bell might have been gapped in the raid made by the Danes on Saighir in A.D. 842, and if so the *Life* of Ciaran must have been written previous to that year; for it expressly states "Barcon Ciaran is the name of the bell, and it is now deposited as a sacred relic in the city of St. Ciaran, namely, Saighir." Hence it is clear that neither the bell had been gapped or the city of Saighir demolished at the period of the writing of the legend. We have therefore to inquire what personage flourished about that age, to whom we can, with probability, assign the authorship of the *Life*.

At the period now under discussion, there governed the Church of Saighir, for twenty-one years, a certain Bishop who, in the long list of its ecclesiastics, is the only one distinguished by the Four Masters with the title of "*Scribe*." "Cormac MacEladhach, Bishop and Scribe of Saighir," succeeded Anluan as Abbot of Saighir, in A.D. 846, only four years after the first attack on that city by the Danes in A.D. 842; and if it was in this assault of the Danes that the "Barcon Ciaran" was gapped, from which resulted the alteration in its name, Cormac must have written the *Life* of Ciaran before his promotion to

this extract from Keating, the building of the wall around the cemetery of Saighir, is recorded under the year 917; but this must be an incorrect date, as, whilst the wall was in course of erection, Donnchadh, King of Ossory, the father of Queen Sabdh, died, and was interred with great solemnity in the churchyard of Saighir; and his death is recorded by the Four Masters under the year 974. This lady, who is denominated Sabdh by Keating, is designated Mor by the Four Masters. Both describe her as the daughter of Donnchadh, son of Ceallach, King of Ossory, and the wife of Donnchadh, King of Ireland. According to the Four Masters, she died in the year 985, so that she could not have emerged from her infantine years in 917, when, according to Keating's chronology, she being queen of Ireland, procured workmen out of Meath to erect the wall around the graves of her ancestors.

¹ "Septunn, or wall." See a diagram of the remains of this ancient building by Rev James Graves. "History, Antiquities, and Architecture of the Cathedral of St. Canice," page 13.

the Abbacy in A.D. 846, and even before the raid on the city in the year 842. Cormac governed Saighir from A.D. 846 to 867. That he was the author of the legend in question appears to be highly probable, and that it had been written anterior to his promotion to the Abbacy is clearly established from the internal evidence of the document itself, which represents Saighir as being in the undisturbed enjoyment of its primitive institutions. Its affluence in flocks, herds, cattle, and landed possessions is duly detailed, and in extenuation of its riches in gold and silver, we are told that they were the special result of the prayers of St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise. But no reference, whatever, is made to any attack on either the church, city, or property of the institution, from which it certainly follows that the Legend of Ciaran's Life was written before the year 842, when the city was plundered by the Danes in a raid from their ships in the Shannon; and with this critique on the age and writer of the Legend, we shall now quote its testimony in illustration of the date of Ciaran's birth.

"Thirty years or thereabouts Ciaran spent in Ireland before he was baptized. On learning of the spread of Christianity in Rome—he proceeded thither—and remained there for the term of *twenty years*—[being there] "ordained and sent back to Ireland to preach the Gospel, he met St. Patrick in Italy, when Patrick said to Ciaran, 'Proceed before me to Ireland, and you will meet a well in a solitary spot—erect a Monastery for yourself at that well—and in *thirty years* I will follow you to that place, and they blessed and greeted each other.'"

As this passage will require a more ample illustration in its proper place, we shall use it here only as a guide to the date of Ciaran's birth.

St. Patrick arrived in Ireland in 432. Thirty years before that date brings us to himself and Ciaran conversing in Italy at the year 402. Ciaran was thirty years old before he left Ireland, and as he remained twenty years in Rome he must have been 50 when he met St. Patrick in the year 402. Now take 50 from 402, and you arrive at A.D. 352, as the date of St. Ciaran's birth. These are the statistics upon which Dr. Lanigan and Dr. Todd rejected the entire chronology. In the first place its whole testimony appears to rest on the "thirty years" prophecy, and if this be rejected as inadmissible from its being either apocryphal or supernatural, the whole chronology must fall to the ground. But if we analyse the passage, its context will show that both those who have accepted and those who have rejected

its testimony, have deduced from it highly untenable conclusions. The words addressed by St. Patrick to Ciaran are—

“Proceed before me to Ireland.—You will meet *a well in a solitary spot*. Erect a Monastery for yourself *at that well*, and in thirty years *I will follow you to that place*.”

There is no authority in this passage for the statement so often advanced that Ciaran preceded St. Patrick by thirty years as a missionary in Ireland. The express words are: “In thirty years I will follow you to that place,” namely to the well in the solitary spot. Hence we must calculate the date of the birth of Ciaran not from the date of the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland, but from the date of his arrival in Saighir.

The visit of the Irish Apostle to St. Ciaran is thus concisely recorded in the life of the latter :

“St. Patrick and Aengus Mac Nadhfrach went with an immense multitude to Saighir, where Ciaran dwelt, and besides the other food prepared for dinner, eight bullocks were killed for the occasion, &c.”

This is the only interview on record between the Irish Apostle and St. Ciaran in Ireland; and it is the last of the many visits paid by King Aengus Mac Nadhfrach to our Saint. It is recorded late in the history of Ciaran’s Life, and has all the appearance of having been a farewell visit.

Now at what time did Patrick pay this visit to Ciaran at Saighir? If we can determine its date it will enable us to arrive at the precise period of his birth. The investigation of this subject more properly belongs to the narrative of Ciaran’s life, in which it forms an important event. For our present purpose, it will suffice to state that the visit of the Irish Apostle to St. Ciaran at Saighir, is to be determined by the date of St. Patrick’s return from his mission in Munster. On that occasion, King Aengus and a great multitude accompanied him to the borders of Munster, to bid him a last farewell and to receive his final benediction. The road by which the Apostle returned was through the territory of Eilie, now partly represented by the baronies of Eliogarty in Tipperary, and Ballybrit in the King’s county, keeping west of the Slievebloom Hills, and not far from the present town of Birr—his next station after leaving Munster, being on the river Brosna, in the immediate vicinity of the monastery of Saighir, then governed by St. Ciaran. The apostle, the king, and their retinue visited Ciaran,

and were hospitably entertained in the monastery. Let us now see the date of this visit.

Patrick entered Munster in A.D. 448,¹ and he remained evangelising that kingdom, for seven years.² Consequently, his departure thence should have taken place in the year A.D. 455, at which date Ciaran had attained the eightieth year of his age; for he was thirty years old when he left Ireland for the continent. He was twenty years away, and consequently fifty when St. Patrick prophesied that they should meet again at the "well in the solitary spot, in thirty years hence," which thirty years bring us to Ciaran in the eightieth year of his age, in the year 455, when St. Patrick visited Saighir; and if we take eighty years from the year 455, we have precisely 375 for the date of Ciaran's birth. And thus, his paternal pedigree, his maternal genealogy and the chronology of his own life, concur in giving us the same year, namely 375, as the date of his birth, which date we shall adopt through the sequel of this Memoir.

¹ "A.D. 448." This is the date fixed on by Ware. Ussher has 449. And as the Apostle preached through Leinster and Ossory in 448, it must have been towards the close of that year that he entered Munster, which might justify Ussher in dating the event for the following year.

² "Seven years." "*Deserente Mummoniam in qua septem annis continuis juxta supra dictis laboravit, et veniente ad extremos ejus fines, monstravunt totius provinciae magnates et populi se tanto spirituales Patris et apostoli duci desideris et affectii,*" &c. *Trias Thuam*, p. 159.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. CIARAN WAS SECOND COUSIN TO AENGUS MAC NADHFRACH,
KING OF MUNSTER.

The relationship between Ciaran and Aengus MacNadhfrach, the first Christian King of Munster, forms the last proof to be submitted in support of the pre-Patrician mission of our Saint.

The cousinship of Ciaran with King Aengus is exemplified in the table of their collateral descents from Lughaidh Mac Conn. (See above page 13). Ciaran's descent from that chieftain has been already illustrated in his maternal genealogy found in the *Corca Laidhe*." (See 2nd chapter), and the pedigree of King Aengus, of Munster, from the same common ancestor, and exhibited in the same table, is founded on the following passage from the *Ogygia*, p. 308:

"Corc, returning home (from Scotland), succeeded his uncle, Achy, as King of Munster. He had by Abinda, the daughter of Aengus Bolg, a prince of Corcalaidia, Nathfraich and Cas. Nathfraich, after his accession to the crown of Munster, had Ængus, the first Christian King of Munster," &c., &c.

Corc, having succeeded his uncle in the Kingdom of Munster removed the seat of government from Knockgraffon to *Sidh-dhruim*, subsequently and since called Cashel, of which he was the first King, and took for wife Abinda, the daughter of Aengus Bolg, then a famous chieftain of the tribe of Corca Laighe. This Aengus Bolg had, amongst a numerous offspring, a son named Maine Cherr, and a daughter as above-named Abinda. Maine Cherr had, by a lady whose name is not recorded, a daughter named Liedania, and Abinda becoming the wife of Corc, was the first Queen of Cashel, and had by her husband a son named Nadhfrach, and consequently Nadhfrach, the son of Abinda, and Liedania, the daughter of Maine Cherr, were first cousins. Nadhfrach, becoming the second King of Cashel, had, by a wife not named, Aengus, the first Christian King of Munster; and Liedania taking for husband Lughaidh, of the race of Connla, and son to Ruman Duach, then King of Ossory, had by him a son, namely, the illustrious Bishop Ciaran, whose Biography we are now endeavouring to illustrate; consequently St. Ciaran and Aengus Mac Nadhfrach were second cousins. Aengus MacNadhfrach was King of

Munster, and a married man, on the occasion of the battle of Feamhin, fought in A.D., 445, and was baptized by St. Patrick about the year 450, and, as a matter of course, both himself and his cousin Ciaran must have preceded St. Patrick in Ireland ; and now, with these statistics before us, how are we to hold with Dr. Todd that Ciaran's father could not have been born much before the year A.D. 500? or with the writer in the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record" that Ciaran himself was first cousin and contemporary of Colman, who died King of Ossory in the year 601?—nearly one hundred and fifty years after King Aengus and his cousin Ciaran had gone to Heaven.

CHAPTER V.

OBJECTORS AND OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

The three most prominent amongst the writers who are opposed to the pre-Patrician birth and mission of St. Ciaran are Dr. Lanigan, Dr. Todd, and a correspondent of the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," who writes over the initials of B.M.C. Respecting Dr. Lanigan, it is clear from the arguments with which he undertakes to disprove the proposition, that he studied the subject only so far as it rested on the "thirty years" prophecy; and as viewed from that standpoint, it appeared entirely based on either supernatural or apocryphal data; and being surrounded with chronological difficulties, and copiously draped in fable, he rejected the Legend altogether. Regarding Dr. Todd, I write of him with the greatest respect, and in the very words in which he himself compliments Dr. Lanigan, only substituting one name for the other. (*i.e.* Todd for Lanigan and Ciaran for Patrick). "No man could be more thoroughly honest, or more perfectly ready to express his honest convictions than *Dr. Todd*. But he was pledged by his education and prejudices¹ to deny the Roman journey and with it

¹ "Prejudices." There are few, if any, free from the prejudices of first impressions; and Dr. Todd's writings show that, notwithstanding his anxiety to rise above their influences, the bias of early training to a great extent mastered his intellect. A singular instance of this occurs in his "Memoir" of St. Patrick, where, commenting on an anecdote related by the Irish Apostle in his "Confession," and from which Dr. Lanigan concluded that the invocation of saints was both believed in and practised by St. Patrick, and to disprove which conclusion, Dr. Todd thus singularly argues, "In the same night" writes Todd, "an event occurred which he [St. Patrick] says he could never forget. He had a nightmare which he believed to be a temptation of Satan. He felt as if a great stone had fallen upon him, he was unable to move a limb, and he says, 'How it came into my mind to call out Helias I know not, but at that moment I saw the sun rising in the heavens, and whilst I cried out 'Helias! Helias!' with all my might, lo! the brightness of the sun fell upon me and straightway removed the weight.'" "It is strange," continues Dr. Todd, "that this anecdote should be taken as a proof that St. Patrick practised the invocation of saints. If this was an invocation of a saint, and if it was the custom of the time to invoke saints, and more particularly to invoke Helias as a saint, why did St. Patrick say 'I know not how it came into my head to call upon Helias?' Do not these words very clearly prove that to invoke saints, or, at least, to invoke Helias, was a somewhat unusual thing in St. Patrick's time, 'The true reading of the passage,' continues Dr. Todd, "is probably not ELIAS, or Helias, but Eli, 'my God,' which the copyists, not being able to understand, made Helias, &c."

It is not my intention to use this anecdote either to prove or disprove any one of the two conclusions deduced from it. But, if it was Eli, "my God," and not the prophet Elias, then the following is the gist of Dr. Todd's reasoning. "If this was an invocation of God, or if it was the custom of the time to invoke

the Roman mission of St. Ciaran." The great end and aim of Dr. Todd's "Memoir" is to disprove the Roman mission of St. Patrick. and, therefore, he could not allow such a qualification in one of St. Patrick's successful predecessors. It is true Dr Todd allows Palladius to have received a Roman mission to preach to the Scots. But he can afford to make this concession, as that mission was a failure, and as such proves nothing in favor of Roman propagandism. But, if a predecessor of St. Patrick obtained his commission from the Roman Pontiff to preach the Gospel in Ireland, and if this commission resulted in success, especially as Dr. Todd holds that scattered congregations of Christians existed in Ireland before the arrival of St. Patrick, the circumstance would go far to establish the Roman Christianization of Ireland. And as Dr. Todd laboured with a good will to disprove this conclusion, it is but a matter of course that he should also deny or try to refute the allegations by which it is sought to be established.

But the correspondent of the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record" adopts the opposite extreme of Dr. Todd's views. He not only accepts the Roman mission of St. Patrick as "the glory of our Church"¹ but appears to think that that glory would be very considerably diminished in its brilliancy if the mission had been previously conferred on a less distinguished predecessor; and thus both writers labour to make the same point serve very opposite ends, and by a singular species of contradiction combine to denude St. Ciaran of the diadem with which the saints and the scholars of Ireland had crowned him, in order to prop up their own conflicting theories. But the "glory of our Church" does not require to be sustained at the expense of truth, nor are the facts and dates of history to be warped into accommodation with any favorite foregone conclusion. The pre-Patrician mission of St. Ciaran is to be investigated as an abstract historical proposition, and whether its affirmation renders the Roman mission of St. Patrick the more probable, or

God, and, more particularly, to invoke Him under the name of Eli, "my God," why did St. Patrick say "I know not how it came into my mind to call upon 'Eli,' 'my God.'" Nearly every form of Christianity in Ireland has claimed St. Patrick as a member of its own particular Church; but Dr. Todd is the first who attempted to make the Irish Apostle an infidel, for none but an Atheist could say, "I know not how it came into my mind to call upon God," in time of temptation. We are not to accuse Dr Todd of any such wilful design; but when we see him warping reason and fact to support a foregone conclusion, we must conclude that his clear, logical mind, had been obscured by "the prejudices of his education."

¹ "Our Church." "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," October, 1866.

(as some would childishly imagine), obscures the brilliancy of that mission by having it preceded by a similar commission having been conferred on a native Irish ecclesiastic, are alike foreign to our purpose. The time-honoured memory of our National Apostle blooms like our native shamrock in perennial verdure, the freshness of which will not be impaired by an additional exposure to sunlight.

There have been various objections advanced against the pre-Patrician mission of St. Ciaran, some of them purely conjectural, and as such not requiring to be noticed here. Others, however, have been put forward as resting on historical data. Of these, the following are the only ones the writer feels called on to refute :

FIRST OBJECTION.—THE DATE OF THE REIGN OF AENGUS OSRAIGHE.—It may be as well to mention that the genealogy of his (Ciaran's) father, Luaighre, is preserved in nine descents from his ancestor Aengus, of Ossory, who was expelled from his lands by the Desii, in the reign of Cormac Ulfadha (A.D. 254-277). If this be so, St. Ciaran's father could not have been born much before A.D. 500." Dr. Todd's "Saint Patrick," page 202, n. 6.

It is freely granted that "if this be so," the conclusion is proved; but, if it be not so, the contrary is established. Had this statement been advanced by any other writer than Dr. Todd it would not require to be confuted, as no authority is given in its support. But as Dr. Todd is an authority in himself, he must be confronted with an authority of at least his own grade. I, therefore, confidently refer the reader to the four paragraphs in Keating's reign of Cormac Mac Art, alias Ulfadha, commencing with the words "The Deasies affected," and ending with the words "violent expulsion." The copy from which I quote is Carson's old folio edition, Dublin, A.D. 1723, pp. 129-133. I also refer to the "Ogygia," vol. 2, page 243, Healy's translation; and to O'Donovan's "Tribes and Territories of Ancient Ossory"¹ any one of which will satisfy him that there was no expulsion of the Ossorians from their lands in the reign of Cormac Ulfadha, nor for two hundred years after, till the middle of the fifth century, when Aengus Mac Nadhfrach expelled them from the plains of Magh-Feimhin, and conferred those lands on the Desii, who, till then, and from the time of Cormac Ulfadha, had been confined to the district south of the river Suir. This expulsion

¹ "Ancient Ossory." See Supplement to the Transactions of the Kilkenny Archæological Society, part 2, p. 14, 1850.

of the Ossorians from Magh-Feimhin is sometimes called the first battle of Feimhin, and according to the *Chronicum Scotorum*, it was fought in the year 445; and if Dr. Todd maintains that Aengus Ossory was expelled from those lands on that occasion, then it will follow that Aengus should be living in the latter half of the fifth century, say A.D. 460, and nine descents from that date, at thirty years to each, bring us to Lughaidh, St. Ciaran's father, about the year 730, at which date Ciaran himself would be about thirty years of age, and if he lived to be eighty, should die about the year 780. But, as the conclusion is absurd, so the premises from which it is deduced are equally false.

But the writer in "The Irish Ecclesiastical Record" undertakes to prove that Aengus Ossory was expelled from his lands by the Desii in the reign of Cormac Ulfadha, and quotes to prove it the following passage from O'Clery's transcript of Keating's History of Ireland, preserved in St. Isidore's Rome :—¹

"Understand that it was Aengus of Ossory, with his followers obtained power in Magh Feamhin, and it was the race of Fiach Suighde expelled Aengus of Ossory, with his clans, from Magh-Feamhin, &c."

Upon this passage the writer then argues thus :—

"The Desii were the descendants of Fiach Suighde. Upon the accession of Cormac Ulfadha, they were expelled from their estates in the now county of Meath. They travelled southwards, and obtained lands in the now county of Tipperary, to which they gave the name of Desii. Thus (he continues), there could have been no Desii descendants of Fiach Suighde to expel Aengus, of Ossory, from Magh Feamhin, before the accession of Cormac Ulfadha in A.D. 254; and, consequently, the date of Aengus' ruling in the valley of the Nore is fixed at some period after that, probably A.D. 265."

It is granted that there could not have been descendants of Fiach Suighde to expel the Ossorians from Magh Feimhin, anterior to the

¹ "Rome." Irish Ecclesiastical Record, October, A.D. 1866.

² "Race of Fiach Suighde." In O'Connor's translation it is the "posterity of Fiach Suighde," either of which shows that it was in the time of the posterity or descendants of that chieftain that the Ossorians were expelled from Magh Feamhin, and, therefore, not in the reign of Cormac Ulfadha. But, on this point, Keating is conclusive. He writes, "They (the Desii) bestowed her (viz., Eithne Vathach), upon Aengus, son of Nathfrach, King of Munster. But this Prince could not obtain her without a gratuity to the family that brought her up, and, therefore, Aengus delivered as a dowry, into the possession of the Desies the lands of Magh Feamhin. But he was first obliged to drive the people of Ossory out of these estates, who at that time were the possessors of them." Keating's "Reign of Cormac Mac Art," Carson's edition, p. 130. This is the event which the writer in the "Record" says was accomplished between A.D. 254-259. Aengus MacNadhfrach was baptized by St. Patrick A.D. 450!

reign of Cormac Ulfadha, A.D. 254. But the passage quoted does not say they were expelled in his reign, and if the writer of it had only consulted the three paragraphs in Keating, which precede the one from which he quotes the passage, he would see that the expulsion of the Ossorians from Magh Feimhin occurred on the occasion of the marriage of Aengus MacNadhfrach, in the middle of the fifth century. But, how can the fact of the Desii having been banished from Meath, in the reign of Cormac Ulfadha, prove that Aengus was ruling in the valley of the Nore in A.D. 265? What connection or dependence exists between the two events? But the writer not having studied the context of the three preceding paragraphs, is led to an erroneous conclusion by the wording of this isolated passage.

The quotation from Keating evidently refers to two distinct events, which are not distinguished but confounded by the writer in the "Record." "Understand," says Keating, "that it was Aengus of Ossory, with his followers, obtained in Magh Feamhin." This refers to the conquest of that territory by Aengus in the first century, when he united it to Magh Reighna, and which two provinces, thus united to Magh Air-et-Ros formed the original kingdom of Ossory. Keating continues, "And it was the race of Fiach Suighde expelled Aengus, with his clans, from Magh Feamhin." This refers to the expulsion of the Ossorians from that part of the original Ossory by the Desii in the time of Aengus MacNadhfrach, and Keating here only names Aengus of Ossory as the representative of his tribe, as in the "Chronicum Scotorum," A.D. 1110, we read, "A great meeting of Leath Chuinn (the North of Ireland), with Mumhain (Munster), viz., Donnchadh, son of Mac Lochlaine, and his sons, and *Conall* and *Eoghan*, and the Airghialla, &c." Conall and Eoghan, here named, were the sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and had been dead near seven hundred years at the period of this event, and are here named as the representatives of their respective races, the Cinel Conall, and the Cinel Eoghan; and, in the same way Keating, in the passage above quoted, personifies the whole race of the Ossorians by the name of their ancestor, Aengus of Ossory, who had been dead nearly three hundred and fifty years at the period of the expulsion of his descendants from their estates in Munster, which he had conquered for them during the latter half of the first century. So far, then, for the objection to the antiquity of Ciaran's mission, founded on the age in which his ancestor, Aengus Ossory flourished.

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND OBJECTION.—PEDIGREE OF ST. CIARAN'S FATHER.

The pedigree of Lughaidh, the father of St. Ciaran, from his ancestor, Aengus Ossory, will be found above at page 13, and is the first of my arguments in support of his pre-Patrician career. This is ably contested by the writer in the "Record," in a fair, and I will add, the best argument that had been previously advanced to disprove the proposition. He accepts the pedigree quoted above, and on it he builds the following superstructure, viz., Lughaidh, the father of St. Ciaran, was the son of Ruman Duach, and, according to the Four Masters, Feradach, who died king of Ossory, A.D. 582, was also son of Duach. Hence, Colman, the son of Feradach, and Ciaran, the son of Lughaidh, must have been first cousins and contemporaries, and as Colman died in the year 601, Ciaran, his first cousin, could not have been living two hundred years previously.

I have put this argument in its very best possible form, as I intend to show from it that it, like every other argument which proves too much, proves nothing. But let us, first of all, test the accuracy of the conclusion by the chronology of the pedigree. The enquiry may appear foreign to the immediate object of this memoir, but it will open to us a chapter in local history never before studied.

At the head of Ciaran's paternal pedigree stands Aengus Ossory, whom we have demonstrated to be living till the end of the first century. At the foot of the same pedigree, according to the writer in the "Record," stands Feradach, who died in 582; consequently, between the two chieftains, there must have intervened a period of nearly five hundred years; and, to bridge over this period of time, from Aengus to Feradach, we have but nine descents, which, at thirty years to each, make only 270 years, leaving a genealogical blank of about two hundred years, which we have not a single descendant of Aengus to fill up. Hence, as it would require at least fourteen generations to connect Aengus with Feradach, and as we have but nine, it necessarily follows that the pedigree between Aengus Ossory and Feradach wants precisely five descents; and, if we can prove that the five missing descents occur in the pedigree between Feradach and Ruman Duach, we shall have proved that Feradach was not the brother of Ciaran's father, and

that Ciaran himself was not either a relation or contemporary of Colman, the son of Feredach, who died in the year 601.

In the *Festilogium* of Aengus, and in the *Sanctilogium Geneal.*, the grandfather of Ciaran is named Ruman Duach. In Keating's¹ pedigree of the Kings of Ossory he is simply called Ruman. In the *Book of Leinster*, the list of the Kings of Ossory begins with "Feradach MacD——," the sequel of the patronymic is obliterated. But in the "*Fragmenta Annalium*," and in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, Feradach is distinctly called "Son of Duach." In all the authorities on the point, Ruman Duach holds the eighth degree in descent from Aengus Ossory, which being equivalent to 240 years, and which, being added to A.D. 105 the date of Aengus' death, bring us to Ruman at A.D. 345 when he would be about thirty years old; and if he lived to be eighty would be still alive till about the year 395, or till the end of the fourth century. All the authorities that make Feradach "the Son of Duach," record the obit of the former at A.D. 582, and according to the genealogical rule, his father Duach should be living till about the year 552, whence it becomes certain that Ruman Duach, the grandfather of St. Ciaran, and Duach the father of Feradach, were not only distinct personages, but were living near 150 years asunder. We have seen above that in the pedigree between Aengus Ossory and Feradach there are five generations wanting, which being equivalent to 180 years, precisely fill up the chasm which separates Ruman Duach, the grandfather of St. Ciaran, from Duach the father of Feradach. But we have additional and highly-interesting evidence to submit in further illustration of this point.

THE SEVEN KINGS OF CORCA LAIGHE IN OSSORY.—In the "*Fragmenta Annalium*,"² under the year 582 we find the following passage :

"Feradach was seized with great sickness [and] the race of Connla, [*i.e.* Ossorians], came to take a house upon him, because Feradach son of Duach was of the Corca Laighe, for seven kings of the Corca Laidhe assumed the kingship of Ossory, and seven kings of the Osraighe took the Kingship of Corca Laighe. The race of Connla afterwards came and slew Feradach, and carried away his valuables, and Feradach went to Heaven."

¹ "Keating's pedigree." See O'Mahony's translation, p. 695.

² "*Fragmenta Annalium*." "Three fragments of *Annals* copied from ancient sources by Dubhaltach MacFirbisigh," translated and edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D., for the Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, MDCCLX., p. 9, et seq.

Dr. O'Donovan remarks in a note on this passage, that he can find no reference to this transaction in any other authority. We are not told the names of all those chieftains, nor the dates or causes of their respective transfers, but as we have the names and obits of the three last of the foreign chieftains who reigned in Ossory, we know that the previous four, whose names we have not, are four of the missing descents in the Ossorian pedigree, and as these descents will be wanting between Feradach and Ruman Duach, it will demonstrate the fallacy of making the former the son of the latter. We shall now give a short account of the Corca Laighe dynasty in Ossory.

In the second part of this essay we shall show that, previous to the introduction of those foreign chieftains into the Kingship of Ossory, Aengus MacNadfrach, King of Munster, had banished the seven sons of Ruman Duach, with the whole of the Ossorian tribesmen, from that part of the present County of Kilkenny then, and subsequently, known as Magh-Reighna, into the upper valley of the Nore, then called Magh Airg-et-Ros. From this period, two distinct tribes peopled the territory of Ossory. In the upper half, extending from the Drumdeilgy, or Thornback Hills, three miles above Kilkenny, northward to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, was ruled by the seven sons of Ruman Duach, and their Ossorian clansmen, whence the territory assumed the name of Ui Duach, now anglicised Odagh, a parish in the same district. The southern part, or Magh Reighna, was ruled for the next 150 years, by the seven kings of Corca Laighe, and, the chieftains of each tribe-land taking the title of King of Ossory, we, in consequence, find two kings of Ossory reigning simultaneously; as, for instance, Scanlan Mor, the friend of St. Columb Cill, had been King of Ossory, and was taken prisoner as such by Aedh, King of Ireland, about the year 594, before the Synod of Drumceat, though Colman, the friend of St. Cainnech, was then, and for seven years later, reigning as king of the same territory. From those circumstances arose the great confusion which we find in the Ossorian pedigree from Ruman Duach downwards. The pedigree from the foreign chieftains being distinct from that of the native race, and, neither of them being perfect, genealogists frequently confound them as one; and, in consequence, no two authors agree in the genealogical descents of this period.

From the passage above quoted, we learn that Feradach, though King of Ossory, did not belong to that race, but to the Corca Laighe

or O'Driscols, in the south-west of the present county of Cork, the native tribe and birth-place of Leidania, the mother of St. Ciaran. It is here stated that Feradach was son of Duach, and, as Feradach was of the Corca Laighe, so his father should have been of the same tribe. Ruman Duach, the grandfather of Ciaran, was not of the Corca Laighe—he was of the “race of Connla,” and ancestor of the clan “Ua Duach,” whose name is still associated with an extensive tribe-land of ancient Ossory, namely—Odagh. Hence it is clear that Ruman Duach, the grandfather of St. Ciaran, could not have been the same personage as Duach, the father of Feradach, as they both belonged to two different races, and the error of making him so appears to have arisen from the circumstance that the names of the foreign Chieftains who succeeded Ruman Duach, and who preceded Feradach being unknown, or no record of them having been preserved, the genealogists, in order to perfect their pedigrees, grafted on Duach, the father of Feradach, to Ruman, the grandfather of St. Ciaran, and thus the personages became confounded.

Feradach died in the year 582, and was succeeded by his son Colman, who held the reins of government for the next twenty years. Colman was succeeded by Caenfaladh, in whom the “race of Connla” was again restored to power, and from whom are descended the Mac Gillaphadraig of Ossory. There were seven Kings of the Corca Laighe dynasty, and as Colman was the last or seventh of these, his father, Feradach, must have been the sixth, and consequently the five missing descents in the Ossorian pedigree are represented by the five foreign Kings, who immediately preceded Feradach. These five generations, at thirty years to each, make one hundred and fifty years; and if we ascend from Feradach at A.D. 552, when he was about fifty years of age, the five preceding generations being equivalent to one hundred and fifty years, bring us to A.D. 402, as approximating the date of the introduction of the foreign Kings into Ossory. According to the calculations made above, p. 30, Ruman Duach, at that date, would be far advanced in life, if not already gathered to his fathers. His son Lughaidh was then retired from Ossory, and residing with his wife in the country of Corca Laighe. St. Ciaran was then twenty-eight years old, and as we shall see lower down, left Ireland in three years later for the Continent; from all which we may here conclude that whatever may have originally caused the usurpation of the government of

Ossory by the Chieftains of Corca Laighe, it is perfectly certain that the reign of five of them intervened between the death of Ruman Duach towards the end of the fourth century and the accession of Feradach towards the middle of the sixth, and that, therefore, Feradach could not have been the son of Ruman Duach, as the latter had been living five generations before him.

We have now disposed of the case advanced by the writer in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record against the antiquity of Ciaran's mission, deduced from the chronology of his father's pedigree, and two interesting anecdotes, in further illustration of the same point, may be appropriately introduced here.

St. Cainnech, of Aghaboe, was born in the year 514, and died in A.D. 598, so that his life embraced nearly the entire of the sixth century, and must have been the contemporary of Feradach's father. Feradach died in the year 582, and we can safely assume that his father was still alive thirty years previously, or about A.D. 552. At that date Cainnech was thirty-eight years of age, and must have known Feradach's father. Now, the following anecdote from the life of St. Cainnech bears directly on the point under discussion, and will show that Duach was long dead before Cainnech's time. On a certain day, St. Cainnech came to the monastery of Cluain Sescenan, now Clonsast, in the King's County. He found the inmates overwhelmed with sadness for the death of a certain little boy, who had been blind, deaf, and dumb, and of whose birth and parentage nothing had been known. The narrative then proceeds:—

“¹ Then Kenny entered into that house, and, at his prayer, the boy at once rose up; and, having received the cure of his eyes, and ears, and tongue, he told them his family and name, saying, “*My family is of the posterity of Duach*, and my name is Emene; for my parents were noble, and my birth was a timely aid to him in whose house I was born—therefore did they call me Emene; but afterwards, when they beheld me blind, and deaf, and dumb, they despised me, and, coming hither by night, they abandoned me.”

If Duach was Feradach's father, he must have been alive, or only very shortly deceased at the period of this occurrence; but, that Duach had been then long dead, is demonstrated by the language of this boy, who speaks of his own parents as being then dead. He says they

¹ Vita Sancti Kannachi, cap. 37, Ormonde edition, Dublin, 1853.

were of noble extraction, being of the "posterity of Duach," which is totally irreconcilable with the fact of Duach having been alive for many past generations. The Life of Ciaran is still more decisive on this subject. The following passage is conclusive:—

"When St. Patrick came to Aengus MacNadfrach, King of Munster, who believed of God, and in St. Patrick, there came *a man of the race of Duach, of the territory of Ossory*, and maliciously killed St. Patrick's horse. But he was taken prisoner by the King's followers. His relatives implored St. Ciaran in his behalf, and he went to the King, and gave him immense presents of gold and silver for his ransom, and therefore he was released, and allowed to depart to his own country," &c., &c.

Duach, named in this passage, was the ancestor of the Ui Duach, of Ossory, and, as we have already seen, was the grandfather of St. Ciaran; and a man of his race or posterity is here reported to have killed St. Patrick's horse, on the occasion of the Apostle's visit to Cashel, about the year 450. How, then, could the same Duach be the father of Feradach, who died 150 years later? Hence, it is now finally established that Feradach could be neither the brother of St. Ciaran's father, Lughaidh, nor the son of his grandfather, Ruman Duach; and, thus is conclusively refuted the most plausible case ever made out against the pre-Patrician birth and mission of St. Ciaran. In concluding this digression on the genealogy of the Ossorian family, the annexed table will show the interruption in the "race of Connla," by the usurpation of the government by the seven Kings of Corca Laighe. The spaces marked "blank"¹ represent the names of the missing descents in the pedigree:—

¹ "Blank." Only three blanks appear below in the pedigree, though five are stated in the text; but neither Duach nor Concruidhe are found in any of the Ossorian genealogies, so that their places should be blanks, if not filled up from other authorities.

Genealogical Table of the Kings of Ossory from Aengus, the founder of that Principality, who died in the beginning of the Second Century, to Scanlan Mor, who died in the year 640, at an average of thirty years to each generative descent:

"RACE OF CONNLA."			
1	Aengus Osraighe,		A.D. 105
2	Leoghaire Birn,		,, 135
3	Amalgaidhe,		,, 165
4	EochaidheLeithe-Trein		,, 195
5	Buan of Osraighe,	"RACE OF CORCA LAIGHE."	,, 225
6	Nia Corb,	Lughaidh MacConn,	,, 255
7	Cairbre Caem,	Maicniadh,	,, 275
8	Conaill,	Aengus Bolg,	,, 315
9	Ruman Duach,	Maine Cher,	,, 345
"RACE OF CORCA LAIGHE."			
10	Concruidhe,	10 Lughaidhe, Liedania,	,, 375
11	Blank,	11 St. Ciaran.	,, 405
12	Blank,		,, 435
13	Blank,		,, 465
14	Dnach,		,, 495
15	Feredach,		,, 525
16	Colman,		,, 555
"RACE OF CONNLA" restored.			
17	Caemfaladh		,, 585
18	Scanlan Mor		,, 615

In this table, the first date, A.D. 105, represents the death of Aengus Ossory, at which time his son, Leoghaire Birn, was thirty years old, and his grandson, No. 3, would be then just born; A.D. 375 represents Lughaidh and Liedania, the parents of Ciaran, at thirty years of age, and also the birth of Ciaran himself; A.D. 615 represents Scanlan Mor as being then thirty years old. According to the Four Masters, he died in A.D. 640, which corroborates the chronology of the pedigree. The succession in the race of Connla was interrupted after the death of Ruman Duach by the usurpation of seven kings of the race of Corca

Laighe, who held possession of the government for over one hundred and sixty years. After the death of Colman, in 601, the race of Connla was again restored in the person of Caennfaladh, from whom have descended the sept of the MacGillaphadraig of Ossory.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIRD OBJECTION—ST. CIARAN IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN A STUDENT IN THE SCHOOL OF CLONARD, AND ONE OF THE “TWELVE APOSTLES OF IRELAND” IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SIXTH CENTURY, AND THEREFORE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BORN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOURTH.

The argument of this objection establishes nothing against the antiquity of Ciaran’s birth, as the statements in it can only be advanced to support the stories of his extraordinary age. Those ancient writers who make Ciaran the contemporary of Finian and Brendan, and Ciaran, of Clonmacnoise, believed that he had reached the great patriarchal age of three hundred years. This ancient faith in the longevity of Ciaran is thus expressed in the Martyrology of Donegal—¹ “Sixty years and three hundred was his age when he yielded his spirit.” If Ciaran had attained this great age, he certainly would have been the contemporary of the saints of the sixth century. But those who can find no authority on which to ground their faith in this great longevity, cannot be required to accept of Ciaran as the contemporary of men who, in the ordinary course of nature, must have been alive long after his death. But whether he had been favoured with that great length of days, or departed this world within the natural period of human existence, proves nothing respecting the age in which he was born. Dr. Lanigan, who first advanced this objection against the antiquity of Ciaran’s birth, admits that “he (Ciaran) became a Bishop about A.D. 538,” though, in a foot note, he adds, “But as he is not named in the second class of Irish Saints who flourished after the year 544, we may suppose that he had become distinguished some years earlier.”² But this is all pure conjecture, having no other foundation than the anachronisms with which the Lives of the Irish Saints abound, and which cannot be accepted till first tested by genuine criticism. If Ussher be correct, Finian’s school was not opened at Clonard till A.D. 544, and if Ciaran had been consecrated Bishop in A.D. 538, his school-boy days had ended before Finian’s school had opened. This is but one of the many contradictions in which the opponents of St Ciaran’s antiquity have involved themselves.

But it is further advanced against the antiquity of St. Ciaran’s

¹ “Martyrology of Donegal,” 5th March.

² “Earlier.” Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, vol. 2, page 8, n. 22.

were of noble extraction, being of the "posterity of Duach," which is totally irreconcilable with the fact of Duach having been alive for many past generations. The Life of Ciaran is still more decisive on this subject. The following passage is conclusive:—

"When St. Patrick came to Aengus MacNadfrach, King of Munster, who believed of God, and in St. Patrick, there came *a man of the race of Duach, of the territory of Ossory*, and maliciously killed St. Patrick's horse. But he was taken prisoner by the King's followers. His relatives implored St. Ciaran in his behalf, and he went to the King, and gave him immense presents of gold and silver for his ransom, and therefore he was released, and allowed to depart to his own country," &c., &c.

Duach, named in this passage, was the ancestor of the Ui Duach, of Ossory, and, as we have already seen, was the grandfather of St. Ciaran; and a man of his race or posterity is here reported to have killed St. Patrick's horse, on the occasion of the Apostle's visit to Cashel, about the year 450. How, then, could the same Duach be the father of Feradach, who died 150 years later? Hence, it is now finally established that Feradach could be neither the brother of St. Ciaran's father, Lughaidh, nor the son of his grandfather, Ruman Duach; and, thus is conclusively refuted the most plausible case ever made out against the pre-Patrician birth and mission of St. Ciaran. In concluding this digression on the genealogy of the Ossorian family, the annexed table will show the interruption in the "race of Connla," by the usurpation of the government by the seven Kings of Corca Laighe. The spaces marked "blank"¹ represent the names of the missing descents in the pedigree:—

¹ "Blank." Only three blanks appear below in the pedigree, though five are stated in the text; but neither Duach nor Concruidhe are found in any of the Ossorian genealogies, so that their places should be blanks, if not filled up from other authorities.

Genealogical Table of the Kings of Ossory from Aengus, the founder of that Principality, who died in the beginning of the Second Century, to Scanlan Mor, who died in the year 640, at an average of thirty years to each generative descent :

"RACE OF CONNLA."			
1	Aengus Osraighe,		A.D. 105
2	Leoghaire Birn,		" 135
3	Amalgaidhe,		" 165
4	EochaidheLeithe-Trein		" 195
5	Buan of Osraighe,	" RACE OF CORCA LAIGHE."	" 225
6	Nia Corb,	Lughaidh MacConn,	" 255
7	Cairbre Caem,	Maicniadh,	" 275
8	Conaill,	Aengus Bolg,	" 315
9	Ruman Duach,	Maine Cher,	" 345
"RACE OF CORCA LAIGHE."			
10	Concruidhe,	10 Lughaidhe, _____ Liedania,	" 375
11	Blank,	11 St. Ciaran.	" 405
12	Blank,		" 435
13	Blank,		" 465
14	Duach,		" 495
15	Feredach,		" 525
16	Colman,		" 555
"RACE OF CONNLA" restored.			
17	Caennfaladh		" 585
18	Scanlan Mor		" 615

In this table, the first date, A.D. 105, represents the death of Aengus Ossory, at which time his son, Leoghaire Birn, was thirty years old, and his grandson, No. 3, would be then just born; A.D. 375 represents Lughaidh and Liedania, the parents of Ciaran, at thirty years of age, and also the birth of Ciaran himself; A.D. 615 represents Scanlan Mor as being then thirty years old. According to the Four Masters, he died in A.D. 640, which corroborates the chronology of the pedigree. The succession in the race of Connla was interrupted after the death of Ruman Duach by the usurpation of seven kings of the race of Corca

Laighe, who held possession of the government for over one hundred and sixty years. After the death of Colman, in 601, the race of Connla was again restored in the person of Caennfaladh, from whom have descended the sept of the MacGillaphadraig of Ossory.

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But it is further advanced against the antiquity of St. Ciaran's

¹ “Martyrology of Donegal,” 5th March.

² “Earlier.” Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, vol. 2, page 8, n. 22.

birth, that he is named amongst the "Twelve Apostles" of Ireland, all of whom, we are told, belonged to the same school of Clonard. But the fact of Ciaran being so named, does not necessarily imply that he was the contemporary of the others. There is nothing more usual in Irish History than that the head of a clan, or the founder of a monastery, to be subsequently named as being still living in the persons of his successors. "It must be admitted," says Eugene O'Curry, "that the mode of speaking in the present tense, used by distinguished ecclesiastics of the fifth and sixth centuries, continued to be used in the eighth and ninth, as may be seen in the Notes upon the Festilogry of Aengus Ceili Di, though that work itself was written but shortly before the year 798."¹ We have seen above, at p. 28, how Conall, Eoghan, and Aengus Ossory are put forward as fighting men many centuries after they had departed this life, and we shall now see that the same rule was followed with the representatives of the Saints, called the "Twelve Apostles" of Ireland. We take the following passage from Dr. Todd's "Memoir of St. Patrick," p. 148 :

"Domhnall, King of Ireland, in A.D. 636, is represented as sending for the "Twelve Apostles" in order to bless and consecrate the banquet of Dun-na-ngedh, and avert the curse pronounced upon it by Bishop Erc, of Slaine, &c., &c."

In the year 636 many of the Saints called the "Twelve Apostles" of Ireland, had been near a hundred years departed this world. St. Mobbi, of Glasnevin, died in 544; St. Ciaran, of Cluain, and St. Columba, of Terryglas, died in A.D. 548, and not one of the twelve had been alive for near half a century anterior to the date of this banquet. The learned author of the "Memoir" detects the anachronism of the King sending for the "Twelve Apostles" to bless this banquet, not one of whom was then living; but explains the difficulty by supposing that the invitation of the King referred to the successors of the "Twelve Apostles" in their respective churches. Strange, indeed, to find the same learned writer making in the same book one of his strongest points against the antiquity of Ciaran's birth rest on the fact of his being named one of the "Twelve Apostles" of Ireland, who, he says, all belonged to the school of Clonard. But, adopting Dr. Todd's own line of argument, if these Saints be still recognized as act-

¹ "In the year 798." Lectures on the Manuscript Material of Irish History.

ing in the capacity of the "Twelve Apostles," many years after their respective departures from this world ; and, if their successors be so esteemed, as their representatives, why would not St. Ciaran be so esteemed a century after his death ? And why would not one of his successors be so regarded in the school of Clonard, and, in his person, have the saint himself named as one of the "Twelve Apostles" of Ireland ? But the objection to the antiquity of Ciaran's birth, founded on the circumstance of his being named among the Saints of the sixth century, is fully answered by the first point established in this chapter, namely :—If St. Ciaran lived to the great age given him by his panegyrist, then, indeed, he might be named one of the "Twelve Apostles" in *propria personæ*. If he did not attain that great age, his successor of Saighir might be so named as his representative ; but whether he did, or otherwise, in no way affects the period of his birth.

CHAPTER IX.

OTHER OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE ANTIQUITY OF ST. CIARAN'S BIRTH
AND MISSION.

Two other arguments have been advanced against the pre-Patrician mission of St. Ciaran, which deserve to be here noticed—not, however, on account of their intrinsic importance, but rather through deference to the sources from which they have emanated. The first is from the pen of B.M.C., in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, and is founded upon the pedigree of Ciaran's mother. We give the objection in the writer's own words :—

"It now remains to enquire into the genealogy of his (Ciaran's) mother, Liedania. Cathal Maguire, among many other particulars concerning her, gives the following, which bears directly upon the present question :— 'Liedan, indeed, the daughter of Maine Cher, son of Aengus (Bolg), of the race of Lughaidh, son of Ith, was the mother of Ciaran, of Saighir, and at Finntract he was born; and it was the angels of God attended upon him after his birth,' " &c., &c.

"This pedigree," continues the writer, "does not contain the descents [it should be the ascents] from Aengus to Lughaidh, son of Ith." But the ascents from Aengus Bolg, the grandfather of Liedania, to Lughaidh, son of Ith, could throw no light on the subject, as they belong to a period long anterior to the birth of this lady, and would carry us back to more than a thousand years before the Christian era. But we have the descents from Lughaidh Mac Conn to Aengus Bolg, the grandfather of Liedania, and as we have the date of Mac Conn's reign, we can descend from it through four generations, which bring us to Ciaran himself. The writer continues :

"This Lughaidh (*i.e.*, Mac Conn, not Lughaidh, son of *Ith*), is a famous character in Irish history, having defeated Art, monarch of Ireland, in the celebrated battle of Magh Mucruimhe, and held, in consequence, the crown during four years. The following authority will suffice for our purpose : 'Lughaidh Mac Conn, with a fleet of foreigners, arrived A.D. 250, and became King of Ireland by killing of Art, monarch of Ireland, in battle about Athenry, eight miles from Galway,' (O'Flaherty's *Iar Con-naught*, p. 43). This proves (he continues), that Aengus, of Ossory, and Mac Conn were contemporaries, and that, consequently, the pedigree of Liedania wants about four descents."

It is freely granted that Mac Conn became King of Ireland in

A.D. 250. But how does his arrival in Ireland in that year prove that he and "Aengus of Ossory were contemporaries?" And how can this untenable and erroneous conclusion prove that "the pedigree of Ciaran's mother wants about four descents?" This argument, if such it can be called, furnishes its own refutation.

The last objection to the antiquity of Ciaran's birth, with which we have to deal, is the following hypothesis of Dr. Todd's:

"It seems perfectly manifest, therefore, that the whole story of Bishops sent from Rome to the south of Ireland, before St. Patrick, was invented at the beginning of the eleventh (perhaps, I should say, the twelfth) century, for the establishment of Archiepiscopal jurisdiction in the south." St. Patrick, p. 220.

The Bishops here alluded to as having been sent from Rome to Ireland before St. Patrick, are Ailbh, Declan, Ibar and Ciaran; and the "claim to Archiepiscopal jurisdiction in the south," refers to the pretensions of Cashel to precedence over the church of Armagh, which had been so boldly put forward by the Cashel statesmen during the time of Cormac Mac Cuilleanan. But as no one of the four Bishops, who are said to have preceded St. Patrick in Ireland, had been at any time attached to the church of Cashel, and as St. Patrick himself is asserted to have been the founder of that church, it does not appear very obvious what could be gained in support of the ecclesiastical supremacy claimed for Cashel by the invention of a story that four Bishops were sent from Rome to Ireland before St. Patrick. Does not Dr. Todd himself inform us that the country around Armagh had been the hereditary tribeland of Bishop Ibar's family; and surely the invention of a story that would make an ecclesiastic of that territory and clan a predecessor of St. Patrick in Ireland, would be but conferring a higher degree of antiquity on the title-deeds of the church of Armagh to metropolitan jurisdiction in Ireland. Thus this objection, like the one previously advanced, forms its own refutation, and is entitled to notice only on account of its distinguished author.

We have now disposed of the several arguments that have been advanced against the pre-Patrician mission of St. Ciaran. We now proceed to the interesting Memoir of that mission, compiled fully a thousand years since, and the details of which will be found singularly to corroborate the conclusion which we have here established respecting the date of his birth. But before entering on the narrative of St. Ciaran's Life, it will be necessary to introduce it by a short historical survey of the territory and chieftains of Ossory previous to his time.

ST. CIARAN OF OSSORY :

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHY AND SUBDIVISIONS OF THE TERRITORY INSULATED BETWEEN THE RIVER BARROW AND THE RIVER SUIR.

One of the most peculiarly circumscribed districts in Ireland, is the tract of country enclosed between the river Barrow and the river Suir. Those two rivers, with the Nore as a third sister, have their respective sources in the eastern and southern slopes of the ancient Sliabh Bladhma, now the Slieve Bloom Mountains, whence O'Heerin¹ describes Slieve Bloom as "the mountain of most beauteous rivers." In bardic lore those three streamlets are the daughters of the giantess Bladhma, anglicised Bloom, who, after her espousals with a mountain hero of the same title, and in honour of the birth of king "Conu of the Hundred Battles,"² brought forth those three sisters, whose scenic beauties, when more than a thousand years of age, are commemorated in quaint but elegant metre by the author of the "Fairie

¹ "O'Heerin." Gilla-na-naemh O'Huidhrin (*i.e.*, Gillananeve O'Heerin) died, according to the Four Masters, in the year 1420. See his "Topographical Poem on the Tribes and Territories of Ancient Ossory," translated by Dr. O'Donovan and printed in supplement form to the "Transactions of the Kilkenney Archæological Society for the year 1850. The words used by O'Heerin are, "mountain of most beauteous *inbher*," the Irish for *invers*, *i.e.*, "river mouths. O'Donovan corrects him, and says, he should have said, "in which the lovely sister rivers have their fountains."

² "Hundred Battles." The bursting forth of the "three great streams," is enumerated amongst the many phenomena with which the birth day of this distinguished chieftain was signalized. See *Ogygia*, vol. 2, page 207-8.

Queen." "The goodly Barrow," as Spenser terms it, has its source in a remote valley called "Glen Barrow," in the ancient territory of Eilie O'Carroll, now in the north-western extremity of the Queen's County, barony of Tinnahinch, parish of Rearymore, and thence curving round the bases of numerous cliffs; towards the town of Portnahinch it forms the northern boundary of the Queen's County, through Portarlinton to Monasterevan, from above which latter it descends to the south by a right angle with its previous course, thus forming the eastern boundary of the same county to near the town of Carlow, thence separating the barony of "Idrone East" from that of "Idrone West" to the town of New Ross, from which, to its junction with the sea, it constitutes the eastern boundary of the county of Kilkenny.

"The gentle Suir," as this sister of the Barrow is termed in the "Fairie Queen," has its source in the valleys of the "Devil's Bit" mountain, a southern arm of Slieve Bloom, parish of Killea, in the ancient country of "south Eilie," now in the north-east of the county of Tipperary, from which, descending southwards to the town of Thurles, and receiving there the waters of an important tributary, it curves, with renovated vigour, towards the venerable ruins of "Holy Cross," and thence through "Golden," "Ardfinan," and "Cahir," after which it sweeps, by an abrupt curve, to the east, and forming a right-angle with her downward course, "then maketh way by sweet Clonmel, to adorn rich Waterford," in the harbour of which it forms another right-angle with the river Barrow, whence both flow together to the sea.

The country insulated by those two rivers, forms a kind of an irregular quadrangle, having its northern and eastern sides formed by the river Barrow, and its southern and western by the river Suir, and measuring, at a mean average, sixty statute miles from north to south, by forty miles from east to west. In the north-west angle of this insulated territory, where Slieve Bloom lifts her head to "the height of Ireland," the third of the sister rivers also has her birth—

"The stubborn Newre, whose waters grey,
By faire Kilkenny and Rosspont board,"

risers in the valleys of the "Devil's Bit" Mountain, near the source of the Suir, in the north-eastern extreme of the county of Tipperary, from which, winding through dells and ravines, it separates the parish

of Kyle, in the diocese of Killaloe, from that of Aghaboe, in the diocese of Ossory. Here it is a very feeble rivulet, but taking a south-easterly course, it gathers the numerous streamlets from the western slopes of the SliabhMargie hills, whence, increasing in volume, it proudly meanders through the city of Kilkenny, from which, curving still more towards the east, it flows through Thomastown and Inistioge, to unite with the Barrow, near the town of New Ross, from which both flow together to join their sister Suir in Waterford Harbour. Their sisterly embraces is thus chaunted by the "Fairy Queen":

"All which, long sundered, do at last accord
To join in one, ere to the sea they come;
So flowing all from one, all one at last become."

The territory thus insulated by the Barrow and the Suir, is intersected by numerous mountain ridges, which being here, as in other parts of Ireland, the last denuded of their primeval vegetation, remained for centuries impervious fastnesses, and as such were originally adopted by the primitive Chieftains as the common boundaries of their respective possessions, whilst the land first cleared and converted into fields, would naturally be the fertile plains protected by mountain ridges, and irrigated by mountain streamlets; and accordingly we find the flat and sheltered districts in this territory between the rivers, presenting to us some of the earliest scenes of historic life in Ireland; each of them preserving, as an historical memorial of its origin, the name of the Patriarch who first cleared it of wood, rendered its soil fit for tillage and pasture, and established amongst its colonists the elementary forms of social and civil usages. Those flat districts may be described as three great plains or extensive valleys, separated from each other by mountain ridges, and with those ridges extending the entire length of this territory, from the Barrow on the north, to the Suir in the south, and were respectively known, in very remote times, as "Magh Airget-Ros," "Magh Reighna," and "Magh Feimhin." A brief historical survey of each will introduce us to the subject of our narrative.

MAGH AIRGET-ROS.¹—The word *Magh* pronounced "Moy," is a

¹ "Airget-Ros" is variously written, Arget Ros, Argat Ros, &c. It is also said to come from Argeat, silver, and Ros, a grove or wood—*i.e.*, the grove or wood of silver, a rather incongruous descriptive epithet. It is much more likely

very primitive Celtic word, and was originally applied to lands which had been cleared of wood. It is now translated a plain, and is usually found in connection with extensive flat districts. Magh Airget-Ros was the most extensive and the most northerly of the three plains in the territory between the rivers; it extended from the stream of the Barrow where it forms the northern boundary of the Queen's County southwards to the Drumdeilgy or Thornback ridge, three miles above the city of Kilkenny, and included the whole of the flat country of the present Queen's County, anciently called Magh Laoighis or the plain of Laoighis or Leix, comprising the present baronies of "East" and "West Maryborough," "Stradbally," "Cullenagh," the old barony of "Upper Ossory," now represented by the modern baronies of "Upperwoods," "Clarmallach," and "Clandonagh," with those parts of the baronies of "Galmoy," "Fassidinan," and "Cranagh," in the County of Kilkenny, which border on the river Nore. It did not include the barony of Tinnahinch, it being north of the river Barrow, and therefore outside of the "territory between the rivers." In this territory silver shields were first made in Ireland. This event is thus recorded by the Four Masters under A.M. 3317, which, according to their chronology, is equivalent to 1377 years before the Christian era. "It was by this Enna Airgtheach that silver shields were made at Airget-Ros so that he gave them to the men of Ireland." In the surname of this chieftain, we have the origin of the name by which this plain had been subsequently known, for the "th" being aspirated in Airgtheach will leave the pronunciation "Airgeach," to which prefix Magh and add Ros, and you have Magh Airgeach Ros—the plain of Airgeach's grove. It was probably in this grove that the shields were forged for the men of Ireland, which, being so important an event at that period, the entire plain was called from it. It was in this plain also that Erian and Ere, the founders of the Milesian monarchy, erected their earthen palace over the river Nore. And as this river is not only the most prominent feature in the physical geography of the plain of Magh Airget-Ros, but will also occupy our attention in the opening of St. Ciaran's mission, a short enquiry respecting the derivation of its name may be permitted here. In the

to have been derived from Airgtheach, the name of the chieftain who first manufactured the silver shields there.

Annals of the Four Masters, we find the following entry under the year A.M. 3501 :

As i so bliadain in ro gabh Ereamon agus Emear complaitius os Erind agus ro randsatt Ere ar do ftorra.

It will be observed that in the words *Ereamon* and *Emear*, the “*m*” is punctuated, the effect of which is that it has no sound in the pronunciation. Hence, reading this passage phonetically, the following is the orthography of O’Donovan’s translation :

“This was the year in which Erean and Ear assumed joint sovereignty over Erind, and divided Ere into two parts between them.”

Here we have the key to the derivation of the words Erin and Ire, about which so much ink has been wasted. The two brothers Erean and Ear conquered the island, and established the Milesian monarchy, and from their names it has since been indiscriminately named Erin, Erean, Eire, Ere, &c. The Annalists continue—

As innte bfos do ronad na gniomha so sios la hEireamon, agus la hEmher co na ttaoisiochaib Rath Bfothaig os Eoir i nDrgatt Ros.

“It was in it [that year] moreover that these acts following were done by hEirean and hEire, with their Chieftains, Rathbeath, over the Eoir, in Argat Ros.”

The remains of this rath are still remarkable within one field of the ruined church of Rathbeath, on the west bank of the river Nore, seven Irish miles above Kilkenny. This rath, or earthen fort, was the palace of Erean and Ere, and from them the river over which it was erected, has been, like the country over which they ruled, called by their name; for the Eoir is our Nore, and between the words Eoir, Ere, and Eire, there is no material difference. At the year A.M. 3516, we find the following reference to the rath and river of Eire :

“An cuiccead bliadain decc dEreamhon i righe, agus a ecc a foirceann na ree sin i Raith Beothaig os Eoir i nDrgat Ross.

Accommodating the orthography of this passage to O’Donovan’s punctuation, his translation reads thus :

“The fifteenth year of the reign of Erean ; he died at the end of this period at Rabei over the *Eire* in Argat Ros.”

Here the name of the river and the name of Erean’s brother are

identical. In the Martyrology of Donegal, we read at the 11th March, that Aengus, the Culdee, was educated and buried

Ar bru na Heoire a Laoighis.

“On the brink of the Heoire in Laoighis.”

Here the river, like the Chieftains after whom it was called, takes the “H” occasionally into its orthography. An ancient *ran*, which follows the last quotation in the Martyrology, opens with these two lines—

*Aobhinn suidhe sunn imne
Le taobh Eoire gloine, &c.*

“Delightful to sit here around him,
By the side of the cold, clear Eire.”

According to Dr. Todd’s punctuation of the passage, the “O” in the word Eoire, is mortified, leaving the pronunciation of the name of the river Eire, as in the last passage quoted from the Four Masters. Hence we may conclude that from Erean and Ear the two brothers, founders of the Milesian dynasty, came Hereon, Erean, and Ire, synonymous terms for our word Ireland, and from the same source came Heoir, Eoire, and Ire, the ancient forms of the name of the river Nore.

MAGH REIGHNA.¹—Magh Airget-Ros descends down the valley of the Nore to the Drumdeilgy hills, which run from Thornback to Kilcooly, and which form the southern boundary of that plain. This ridge of hills is broken by a very remarkable ravine or gap well known as Bearna Glassanagh, or the *Gap of the Green Bushes*. Through this gap we now descend from Magh Airget-Ros into the great central plain of the country between the rivers, originally called Magh Reighna. This plain, in which the city of Kilkenny now forms the most prominent feature, extended from the hills last named, three miles above Kilkenny, to the Dunnderg hills at Killamery, twelve miles below it; and from the river Barrow on the east to the “plain of Munster,” alias *Machaire Caiseal*, or the plains of Cashel on the west. Within this plain was situated the church of Cillfinnch,² which O’Donovan holds to

¹ “Reighna.” This word is variously written Raighna, Roighna, Reighna. This last I believe the more general form of the name, though the Four Masters and other authorities, use the three indiscriminately.

² “Killfinnch.” Dr. O’Donovan considered Magh Reighna to be but a simple tribeland of the ancient Ossory, whereas it was a primitive province long before the foundation of the Kingdom of that name, and was subsequently often

be nominally identical with the townland of Killinny, in the barony of Kells, seven miles south of Kilkenny. The church of St. Brachan,¹ now Kilbraghan, on the borders of Munster, eight miles west of Kilkenny, in the barony of Shillelogher, and the church of St. Colman, of Glenn-dealmhaic, which the present writer holds to be identical with

used as another name for Ossory itself. In the annals of the Four Masters, at the year 836, we read of *Cill-finnche* being burned by the Danes, and in a foot note the learned translator observes—"Cill Finnche.—In the gloss on the *Feiliere Aengus*, this church is described as being near a great hill, called Dorn-Buidhe, in Magh Raighne, in Osraighe. It has not been identified." But in his annotations to O'Heerin's Topographical Poem, "Transactions of the Kilkenny Archæological Society, 1850," he writes—"Magh Reighna contains the church of Cill Finnche, now Killinny, a townland in the parish and barony of Kells, county of Kilkenny;" and elsewhere, in the same note he says:—"The plains of Magh Lacha and Magh Roighna are comprised in the present barony of Kells, county of Kilkenny." Now the fact of Cill-Finnche being in the plain of Magh Reighna, and also in the present barony of Kells, proves only that the barony of Kells had formerly been situated within the territory of Magh Reighna; but that the present townland of Killinny was not anciently known by the name of Magh Reighna, is directly to be inferred from O'Heerin's Topographical Poem, in which he thus describes this very locality:

"O'Gloiarian, the fruitful branch, has got

A cantred of a sweet country,

The smooth land, along the beauteous Callan,

A land without a particle of blemish."

The name of this chieftain, O'Gloiarian, or O'Glorain, is still found associated with this district, in the title of the "Glory River." This stream empties itself into the Callan, or King's River, just at Killinny; and, if that townland was then known by the distinguished name of Magh Reighna, would O'Heerin have failed to so designate it as the "Cantred of O'Gloiarain, the fruitful branch." If the ancient word "Cill Finnche" be preserved in the name of the modern townland of Killinny, it must be either preserving the name of another locality, or Killinny must have been formerly much more extensive than the present townland of that name. The Church of Cill-Finnche is described as being near "a great hill." Killinny is a perfect flat along the King's River, and no eminence that could be called a "Great Hill," within four miles of it. In the charter of Henry IV. to the Priory of Kells, the "Church of Killinthy," is enumerated amongst other Churches affiliated to that house. Saint Bridget was the patroness of the old church of Killinny. Its site is well known there, and her "patron" day is well remembered by old people to have been observed on the 1st of February. "The great hill," which stood near the Church of Cill Finnche, is that now called Knockadrinagh, more properly Cnoc-na-Reighna. This hill of Raighna is well known in the barony of Kells, and under its shadow are the venerable ruins of Sheepstown Church, which, from enquiries made elsewhere, have satisfied authorities on the matter that this old edifice is the remains of the ancient Cill Finnche, or church of St Finnche. This, no doubt, proves that the barony of Kells, in which this church stands, is situated within the ancient territory of Magh Reighna; but it does not prove that Reighna was confined to that barony, and the evidence to the contrary, quoted in the text, is as conclusive as can be required on the subject. See Kilkenny Archæological Journal, vol. 5, p. 209.

¹ "St. Brachan." His festival is thus noted in the Martyrology of Donegal, at the 17th September. "Brachan of Ros-tuire in Magh Reighna in Osraighe." Rostuire (the wood of the boar), is now Rossmore, or the great wood. It is the next townland to Kilbraghan. The site of the ancient church and cemetery of the place is still pointed out there by the inhabitants.

the church of St. Colman, of Claragh,¹ four miles east of Kilkenny, in the barony of Gowran; and, consequently, the plain of Magh Reighna was co-extensive with the great central plain of the ancient Ossory. Eugene Mor, who died Monarch of Ireland in A.M. 4606, conferred on his son Reighna, this plain as his dower. Reighna is said to have been a distinguished poet and legislator in his time, and from him this territory was first called Magh Reighna, or the plain of Reighna. This plain is frequently referred to in the Irish Annals. In the year 928 the Danes of Limerick invaded Ossory, and encamped in Magh Reighna; and in the year following, 929, Godfrey, another Danish General, "went into Osraighe to expel the grandson of Imar from Magh Reighna." In the life of St. Cainnech, we find mention of a Chieftain named Donough, of Magh Reighna, who, on the death of Feradagh, King of Ossory, who was slain in 582, headed a band of insurgents to depose his son Colman. They set his fortress on fire, and but for the miraculous interference of St. Cainnech, he would have perished in the flames.

MAGH FEIMHIN.—The southern boundary of Magh Reighna is formed by a high ridge, running nearly east and west, from Ballyhale to Killamory, from which latter the hills are continued, under various elevations, into Slievenaman. This ridge is broken by various ravines or gaps, which afford communication between the plains at either side. The most remarkable of those passes is that called *Bearna-na-gaoith*, vulgarly

¹ "Claragh" The territory anciently called Magh Reighna was precisely co-extensive with the three Deaneries of the diocese of Ossory, called "Siller," (evidently a contraction of Shillelogher), "Claragh" and "Kells." In the "Spicilegium Ossoriense," by Most Rev. Dr. Moran, we have the patron Saints for each of the Churches within those three Deaneries, and there are but two of them dedicated to Saint Colman, namely, Claragh and Tullahanbrogue, or Grove—either of them will answer my purpose, as both are situated within the ancient Magh Reighna. But Claragh appears to be the Church of St. Colman, referred to in the Martyrology of Donegal, on the 5th November thus, "Colman of Glenn-Dealmhaic in Magh Reighna in Osraighe." There is no locality named Glenn-Dealmhaic, now known; the prefix *Glenn* we find always applied to what the word implies, namely, a ravine or valley, or a sheltered district at the foot of a mountain. The church of Tullahanbrogue, or Grove, may be said to stand almost in the centre of a broad table-land, and cannot be described as a *Glenn*. The Church of Claragh stands in a level, as the word Claragh signifies, at the foot of the Johnswell mountains, immediately inside of the ancient "Bealach Gabhran," designated by Cormacan Eageas, chief poet of Hy-Many, a thousand years since, a "district of Glenns," from which we may conclude that the Church of St. Colman of Glenn-Dealmhaic was identical with the old Church of Claragh. The name of the Saint is well known in connection with that venerable ruin, and his "holy well" is shown in the field opposite the Church at the other side of the road.

Barnagee, i.e. "The Gap of the Wind," now Windgap; and, passing out through this dingle, we have presented before us a splendid view of the ancient Magh Feimhin. This plain is situated in the extreme south and south-west of the "territory between the rivers." It consisted, according to Keating, "of the third part of Cluain Mell, and a third part, centrically situated, and Machaire Caiseal, or the plains of Cashel." From these criteria, it will follow that Magh Feimhin comprised the entire country along the north bank of the river Suir, from Clonmel to Fiddown, and thence northwards to the ridge of hills which we have just described as terminating in Slievenaman; and was co-extensive with the present baronies of "Iffa and Offa East," of "Middle Third," and the flat part of the barony of Sliabhardagh, lying north of Slievenaman, and eastwards from Cashel by Mullinahone to the borders of Ossory. The most remarkable historical memorial now preserved in this territory is the ruins of the Royal City of Cashel, in which the Kings of Munster held their court, from the time of Core, who had it transferred thither from Knockgraffon, on the west side of the river Suir, in the second century. In the physical geography of Magh Feimhin, the most prominent feature is the celebrated eminence of Slievenaman, in Irish, Sliabh-na-m-bhan-Fionn, which is translated "the Mountain of the Women of Fionn—the word Fionn being the root from which Feimhin is amplified. This Fionn was the celebrated Fenian leader, generally known as Finn-Mac-Cool; and the legend of the exploits of the fair competitors for his hand on this mountain will be found in the Kilkenny Archæological Journal, 1851, p. 335. Whatever may be the original derivation of Sliabh-na-m-Bhan Fionn, does not immediately concern the object of our enquiries. We must, however, demur to deriving the name of the plain from that of the Fenian Chieftain, as "Femhin was slain" between 59 and 77 of the first century. This was most probably the Chieftain from whom Magh Femhin was so called, and he was alive more than a century before the Fenian leader.

We shall now submit the history of the original establishment of the "territory between the rivers," into one distinct tribeland, of its first subjugation and partial annexation to Munster, and finally its elevation into the ancient kingdom of Ossory.

CHAPTER II.

THE ERIC OF FEARGUS SCANNALL.—THE FIRST ANNEXATION OF THE TERRITORY BETWEEN THE RIVERS TO MUNSTER.

Having now briefly surveyed the topographical outlines of the three great plains into which the territory insulated by the rivers Barrow and Suir is physically divided, we have next to inquire respecting the origin of the tribe which, subject to various modifications, held possession of this territory down to the Anglo-Norman invasion.

About one hundred and fifty years before the Christian era, there lived in Ireland a chieftain named Bresal, surnamed Brec, or speckled. This Bresal Brec left two sons, named respectively, Lughaidh Lothfinn and Connla. The descendants of Lughaidh Lothfinn spread themselves over the country eastwards, from the river Barrow to the Irish Sea, and from them came the Lagenians or men of Leinster. The posterity of Connla planted themselves in the country insulated between the river Barrow and the river Suir, and from them came the Ossorians, or men of Ossory.¹ One hundred years before the Christian era Eidersceal, or as he is otherwise² named, Feargus Scannel, was Ard-Righ, or high king of Erin. He is said to have been a prince of munificence, valour, and hospitality. He was treacherously slain by Nuadh Nect, or the White, a Leinster prince, at a place called Allan, near old Kilcullen, in the now county of Kildare. Nuadh became his successor, but enjoyed the sovereignty only six months, when Conaire Mor, son to Eiderseeal, then King of Munster, in retaliation for his father's death, marched his army into Leinster, and met Nuadh and his forces in a pitched battle, at Cliach, in Idrone, in the now county of Carlow. In this engagement, the Leinster forces were completely routed, Nuadh Nect was slain, and Conaire Mor, leading his Munster army victorious through Leinster, levied a fine on the whole kingdom for the death of his father, which was to be paid to the Kings of Munster for ever; and he also compelled the Leinstermen to consent that more than one-half the territory insulated between the rivers Barrow and Suir, and then in the possession of the race of Connla, should be taken from Leinster and united to Munster for ever, as the eric or payment for the murder of Feargus, the King, the Lagenians binding themselves by the most

¹ "Men of Ossory." Keating's History of Ireland, Carson's edition, page 81.

² "Otherwise." Book of Rights, p. 89, n. a.

solemn treaty of surrendering "heaven and earth, sea and land, sun and moon."¹ This treaty is known in Irish history, as the "Eric of Feargus Scannal," and its enforcement by Munster proved the fruitful source of feuds and bloodshed between that kingdom and Leinster and Ossory, down to the time of Brian Boromhe. Towards the close of the ninth century, when Cormac MacCuilleanan, in pursuance of his aggressive policy, claimed the right of erecting mansion places, or forts, within the territory then subject to the King of Ossory, his bards thus appealed to the terms of this stipulation, in support of their master's claim:—²

"Knowest thou what is called
The Eric of Feargus Scannal?
I know it. I will give a knowledge of it
From the Eoire to Dumha Dresá."

That is to say, the Eric of Feargus Scannal consisted of the lands which extend from the river Eoir, or Nore, to Dumha Dresá, a fort at Knockgraffon, on the river Suir, three miles south-west of Cashel, and the original residence of the Kings of Munster. The Bard continues:

"The Eric of Feargus, the King,
Both in jewels and territory,
They (the Munster men), obtained
In full satisfaction for his death,
Laighin deas Gabhair, even to the sea."

The reading of this *ran* is, that the part of the country insulated between the river Barrow and the Suir, then called Laighean deas Gabhair,³ which lay south of a line drawn from the river Nore at Gabhrán to Knockgraffon, on the river Suir, down to the sea at Waterford Harbour, was obtained by Munster as the "eric" (or payment), for the death of Feargus, the King."

The line here indicated as the northern boundary of the country

¹ "Sun and Moon." Ogygia, par. 3, cap. xlv. Healy's translation. Book of Rights, page 88, n. 1. Dissertation of the Royal Family of the Stuarts, page 81.

² "Master's claim." Book of Rights, p. 89. Transactions of Kilkenny and South-east of Ireland Archaeological Society, vol. 4, page 251, new series.

³ "Laighin deas Gabhair," i.e. Laghain, south of Gabhair, or Gowran. For an enquiry into the origin and territorial extent of the country anciently termed "Laighin deas Gabhair," see Topographical and Historical Illustrations of the County of Kilkenny, Archaeological Transactions, vol. iv., p. 254, et seq. New Series, 1864.

ceded to Munster, exactly corresponds with the ridge of hills which rise from the river Nore, three miles above Kilkenny, called Drumdielgy, or Thornback, and thence, running in a westerly direction to "Grean Hill," at Kilcooly, unite there with the Sliabhardagh mountains, and running thence to near the city of Cashel, and which, when clothed in its original vegetation, formed a regular natural rampart from the river Nore to the river Suir. All the country south of this line, and which included the two great plains of Magh Reighna and Magh Feimhin, was seized on and annexed to Munster; and the race of Connla now expelled this territory, and, driven north of this ridge of hills, were confined within the plain of "Magh-Airget-Ross," extending from Ballyragget, northwards, to the source of the Barrow, in the Sliabh-bloom mountains. Conaire Mor, having thus effected the subjugation of Leinster, and the partition of the country between the rivers, became monarch of Ireland, and, according to some authorities, enjoyed the sovereignty for the next sixty years, during which period, according to the Psalter of Cashel,¹ as well as that of the six kings, who succeeded him, the "Eric of Feargus Scannal" remained in force, and the country between the rivers remained subject to Munster. In the time of Elim MacConry, the seventh in succession from Conaire Mor, and whose reign extended from A.D. 59 to 77, a distinguished chieftain named Aengus sprung up in the race of Connla, who has left his name identified with his conquests to the present day.

¹ "Psalter of Cashel," as quoted by Kennedy in his "Learned Dissertation," p. 81.

CHAPTER. III.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM OF OSSORY.—ANCESTRY OF ST. CIARAN.

Aengus, surnamed Ossory, was son of Crimthan Mor, who was the eighth in descent from Connla, son of Bresal Breac. His mother was Cingit, or Kingit, daughter of the famous chieftain, "Daire, the plunderer," and sister to Curoi MacDaire, who fought in single combat with Cuchuland, the hero of the Red Branch Knights of Ulster, and who was twenty-six years of age at the opening of the Christian era. Cingit, the mother of Aengus, was descended in the seventh degree from Aengus Tuirmeach, who died monarch of Ireland, A.M. 3819, seven descents from which, at thirty years to each, will bring us to her at the year A. D. 25, and consequently her son, Aengus, would be a young man in the middle of the first century.¹ Few chieftains stand out more prominently in the romantic history of Ireland than "Daire the plunderer," and Curoi his son. Aengus would appear to have inherited, through his mother, no small degree of their intrepidity. He disputed the right of Munster to either tribute or jurisdiction in any part of the country east of the river Suir. He incited his tribesmen to resist the encroachments and throw off the yoke of the Munster men; and to assert their own civil and political independence. He engaged the Munster army in the battle of Magh Reighna, slew their leader, the prince² of Feimhin, and drove his followers over the river Suir, thus recovering the two plains of Magh Reighna and Magh Feimhin, after which he formed the entire country between the Barrow and the Suir into a distinct principality, independent alike of Munster and Leinster; and, as this country, as we have already described, was peculiarly circumscribed by water, being bounded on the north and east by the river Barrow, and on the west and south by the river Suir, with the Nore meandering obliquely through its centre, it was appropriately termed *Uiscreachdka*, pronounced Osraighe, and anglicised Ossory, the name being formed of

¹ "First century." See details and proofs of those statements above in chap. 1 of Part First.

² "Prince." This chief is designated Femhin in the Ogygia in which this rather concise notice of this battle occurs, "In Munster fell Femhin, in the battle of Raighney," par. 3, cap. 4. This Femhin was apparently the chieftain who gave his name to Magh Femhin. Our chronologists differ respecting the date of Elim MacConry's reign. The Four Masters agree with Keating in the date given in the text. O'Flaherty is more than half a century behind them in all the events of this period.

the Irish words, *uisce*, water, and *reaghdha*, kingdom, namely, the Kingdom of the Waters, or, more properly, the Kingdom between the Rivers; and thus originated the title by which this territory has been recognized for near two thousand years.

From this brief survey of the establishment of the ancient kingdom of Ossory, it is obvious that the original extent and boundaries of that territory differed very materially from those of its more modern geography. The transition in, and the reduction of, its outlines to their present dimensions, will be fully illustrated, as we descend from Aengus—through his successors—to the subject of our narrative.

Aengus was the founder of the Ossorian dynasty; yet this dynasty is nowhere recognized as the *dal-Osraighe*, *i.e.* the race of Ossory, or the *Ui-Osraighe*, the descendants or tribe of the *Osraighe*, because this tribe did not take its name from its great ancestor or patriarch, but from that of the territory which he conquered, and first erected into a kingdom, and to which, from its peculiar insulation, he gave the name of *Osraighe*, or *Ossory*, from its having been completely enclosed between the river Barrow and the river Suir. From enquiries already made, and which need not be repeated here, the reign of Aengus must have extended over the latter half of the first century of the Christian era, and, from the chronology of his pedigree, he would appear to be living till about the year 105, or, at least, his son, and successor, should be about thirty years of age at that date. The following notice of the burial-place of Aengus occurs in the Book of Leinster—" *Lect Aengusa Osraigi issind ard os Cill Culind*, *i.e.* "The grave of Aengus Ossory is on the height over Cill Cullin." There could be no locality named Cill Cullin (St. Cullin's Church), at the time of the death of Aengus, and the word Cill Cullin here used must be a transcriber's error for Cool Cullin, a wild and romantic region in the midst of the Slieve Margie mountains, in the parish of Dysart, about three miles west of Old Leighlin, and about twelve miles north of Kilkenny, the undoubted resting-place of Aengus, the founder and first King of this ancient principality. He was succeeded by his son.

LEOGHAIRE BIEN BUADHACH.—His mother's name was Sidhe. She was daughter of Dalway, a druid or philosopher of note. Leoghaire was surnamed Buadhach, *i.e.* Victorious, pronounced Buao or Buoo, the war-cry of the ancient Irish, and he is eulogised by Keating as "one of the stoutest heroes of his day." He was the

head or ancestor of the celebrated dal Birn, or chief tribe of the Ossorian family. His tumulus, or sepulchral pile, a colossal heap of earth and stones, is well known in the village of Johnswell, and from it the surrounding locality has been called from time immemorial Tulla-Birn,¹ *i.e.* the Tulach, or tumulus of Leoghaire Birn. According to the chronology of the pedigree, which allows thirty years to a generation, Leoghaire should be living till about the year 135, when his son and successor should be about thirty years of age, and be thinking of taking his place on the stage of life.

AMALGHAIDH (or Amauley), the son of Leoghaire Birn, and second in descent from Aengus Ossory. Of this chieftain, no memorial exists known to the writer except that of his name in the Ossorian pedigree, according to the chronology of which he would be living in the year 165, when, in the natural lineal descent, he would be succeeded by his son, then thirty years old.

ECHTAIDH LAMHDÓID.—The third in descent from Aengus. The period in which this chieftain flourished would extend from the year A.D. 165 to 195, and would, in consequence, be coeval with the reign of Feilmidh Rechtmar, monarch of Ireland, A.D. 164-174.

¹ "Tullabirn," or Tullaghbrin, as the name is often incorrectly written, is the great pile of earth which rises so abruptly over the village of Johnswell, four Irish miles from Kilkenny. This curious eminence is like most others of its kind, locally called "the moat." From a recent inspection, and whilst the materials of which it is composed were being carted away, it would appear, notwithstanding the peculiarity of its outline, to be a natural structure of the Esker kind. But, when you gain the summit, you have before you an undoubted artificial mound, too small to be a rath, yet surrounded by a ditch or fosse, and inside of this an entrenchment, from which gently rises the mound in the centre. The fosse is now nearly demolished, and the entrenchment is, in many places filled up; however, enough remains to show that the mound in the centre had been once protected, as a sacred enclosure, and, as the name of the moat implies, was the final resting-place of "Leoghaire Birn, the Victorious."

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGIN OF THE ANCIENT PRINCIPALITY OF LAOIGHIS.

Feidhlime Rechtmar, succeeded to the crown of Ireland in the year 164, and governed the nation for the following ten years. It was during this period that the Munster men made a desperate effort to recover possession of the lands wrested from them by Aengus Ossory near a century previous, and in violation of the treaty known as the "Eric of Feargus Scannal." In the spirit of vindictive retaliation, the Munster men now aimed at the extinction of the Kingdom of Ossory, and the annexation of its territory to that of Munster, thus extending their conquest to the river Barrow, which they determined should form the common boundary of Munster and Leinster. From the concise sketch of the occurrence given by Keating,¹ the Mummonians must have entered Ossory from the south, and apparently crossed the river Suir into Magh Feimhin at Knockgraffon, where the Kings of Munster then held their court. The Ossorians were but ill-prepared to hold their own against the onslaught of the invaders, before whom they retreated through Magh Reighna to the north of Magh Airget-Ros. The Mummonians, pressing after them, are said to have "conquered and taken possession of Ossory and Laoighis, as far as the top of Maistean," which means that the Ossorians, in their retreat, fled over the Barrow at Athy, into the present county of Kildare, where they were followed by the Munster men as far as the hill of Mullaghmast, on the east side of the river.

Cucurb was, at this time, King of Leinster, and, perceiving the ambitious designs of Munster for territory, and, conscious of his own incapacity to check their fierce advances, at once despatched a messenger to Lughaidh Laoighis, a distinguished general, son of Laoighise Caen Mor, son of the famous hero, Connal Cearneach, for assistance to repel the encroachments of the invaders. Lughaidh, arriving with timely aid to the King of Leinster, their combined forces attacked the

¹ "Keating." In all the editions of Keating's "History of Ireland," those transactions are recorded under the reign of Cormac Ulfadha, A.D. 213. But Eochaidh Fionn, the son of Feidhlime Rechtmar, being one of the principal supporters of the King of Leinster in driving the Munster men out of Ossory, the action must have taken place, if not during the reign, certainly soon after the death of his father Feidhlime Rachtmar. See Keating's History of Ireland, Carson's Edition, pp. 126-7. See also Ogygia, Vol. II., p. 179.

Munster army on the river Barrow near Athy, where a desperate engagement ensued in which the Munstermen were completely subdued and routed across the Barrow, whence they were pursued over northern Ossory to the pass of Bealach Mor, where the few survivors escaped thence into Munster.

After the battle, Cucorb, King of Leinster, reinstated the King of Ossory in the possession of his kingdom "between the rivers." But, in gratitude for the services rendered on the occasion by Lughaidh Laoighis, he conferred on him the seven Fothartuaths, from which circumstance this district has been since called the "Seven Laoighises," and the descendants of Lughaidh assumed the title of Kings of Laoighis, acknowledging the father of Lughaidh, *i.e.* Laoighise Cean Mor, as the head of their clann; and from him have been named the famous Leinster tribe, the Ui Mordha, or O'Moores of Laoighis.

The ancient territory of Laoighis, or Leix, comprised the whole of the present Queen's County, formerly called Magh Laoighis, or the plain of Laoighis. It did not include the barony of Tinnahinch, because it lay north of the river Barrow, and was, therefore, outside of the country "between the rivers," nor did it include the old barony of Upper Ossory, which, by the treaty of those transactions, was left united to the kingdom of the same name. Hence, it will be seen that the Kingdom of Laoighis occupied the entire of the north eastern angle of the country enclosed by the river Barrow and the river Suir; and that its establishment into an independent principality was the first encroachment on the quadrangular form of that territory, and that, from this resulted the oblique irregularity of the eastern outline of the ancient Ossory, and which the diocese of that name preserves to the present day.

What part Eochaidh, King of Ossory, played in the above transactions is not recorded, nor have we any means of connecting him with them, except that of his status in the pedigree, according to which he would be living about the year 195, when his son would have attained his thirtieth year.

BUAN OSRAIGHE, viz., Buan of Ossory, son of Eochaidh Landoitt, and fourth in descent from Aengus, the head of the race, succeeded his father in the genealogical line about the year 195, from which his reign should extend till about A.D. 225. Respecting this chieftain, nothing is known accessible to the writer, except that from him, by his

son Droma, are descended through six generations, two eminent Saints, namely, Aengus Laimoidhan, and Aduanus, both of them bishops and contemporaries of Saint Ciaran. They lived six generations after their ancestor, Buan, of Ossory, which, at thirty years to each, make 120 years, adding which to A.D. 225, bring us to those holy men at the year 405, at which date, as we shall see below, St. Ciaran had attained the thirtieth year of his age, which confirms, in a general way, the accuracy of the chronology on which we are acting, and according to which Buan would be succeeded about the year 225 by his son—

NIA CORB, the fifth in descent from Aengus Ossory. There is a bequest in favour of this chieftain made by Cathair Mor, in his celebrated “Will,” from which it would follow that the genealogists have misplaced him in the pedigree, and that, instead of being the fifth, he ought to hold the third place in the genealogical column. The following is the bequest of Cathair Mor, extracted from Dr. Todd’s translation of Michael O’Clery’s copy of that deed:—

“He (Cathair),¹ also gave to Nia Corb, son of Leaoghair Birn-mBuadhach, son of Aengus of Ossory, one hundred white-speckled cows, with red ears, and a heifer calf with every two cows, besides various gifts; one hundred shields, with projecting rims; one hundred crimson-hafted spears, &c., &c., with the right to give advice to the power of the province of Gaillian,” i.e. Leinster. This last clause is thus rendered into English in Healy’s translation of the “Ogygia,” “with authority to be prime minister to the King of Leinster.”

It is certain that Nia Corb must have been ruling in Ossory at the date of the execution of this deed. Cathair Mor was slain in the year 177; and, unless Nia Corb be misplaced in the pedigree, there is no other way by which he could be the contemporary of Cathair. If Nia Corb was the son of Laighair Birn, and second in descent from Aengus Ossory, he could not be living till the year 174, the date of the accession of Cathair Mor to the monarchy. The explanation of the matter is evidently this²—the “Will of Cathair” was compiled by his son Ross Failghe, some years after his father’s death, and Nia Corb being then King of Ossory, to secure his friendship, and to

¹ “Cathair,” “Martyrology of Donegal.” Introduction p. xxxvi.

² “Evidently this.” The transaction is thus stated by O’Flaherty, *Ogygia*, Vol. II., p. 204:—“Before King Cathair fell in the battle of Taltan, he ordered his son, Ross Failghe, to give the following Legacies to the rest of his sons, and to the other nobles of Leinster,” from which it is to be clearly inferred that it was some years after the death of Cathair that the “Will” was drawn up.

strengthen the alliance between the houses of Leinster and Ossory, Nia Corb is named by Ross Failghe as a legatee under his father's will, and for brevity three intermediate degrees are omitted in his pedigree, and thus he is made the "son of Leaoghair Birn Buadhach, the son of Aengus of Ossory. This bequest in favour of Nia Corb was apparently made for a consideration; for it is worthy of note that the country east of Laoighis, and thence down to the river Barrow, and now known as the barony of "Slieve Margie," in the Queen's County, was anciently denominated "*Ui Bairrche*," (i.e. Hy or O'Barrie), which means the country of Dairie Barry and his descendants. This Dairie was brother to Ross Failghe. This is the second partition of the Kingdom of Ossory, and was, no doubt, an equivalent by Nia Corb for the privilege bequeathed to him in the "Will" of being "Prime Minister in the Court of Leinster." Nia Corb was contemporary with Lughaidh Mac Conn, Monarch of Ireland, who was slain in A.D. 255. This Lughaidh was great-great-grandfather to Liedanie, the mother of St. Ciaran. Nia Corb would be living in the year 255, when he would be succeeded by his son—

CAIRPRE CAEM.—In the Book of Leinster he is named Coirpre Niad. He was sixth in descent from Aengus Ossory, and was contemporary with Maichnaidh or Meanny, the great-grandfather of St. Ciaran's mother. He would be living in the year 285, and was apparently the King of Ossory slain in the "Battle of Gabhra,"¹ near Dublin, A.D. 283. He was succeeded by his son—

CONAILL, the seventh in descent from Aengus Ossory. He was the contemporary of Aengus Bolg, a chieftain of Corca Laighe, and the ancestor of the O'Driscolls. This latter chieftain was grandfather to Liedania, mother of St. Ciaran. Conaill should be alive in the year 315, when, in the order of nature, his son would be about thirty years of age.

ROMAN DUACH was the son of Conaill. He was the eighth in descent from Aengus Ossory, and was the contemporary of Maine Cherr, Prince of Corca Laighe, the father of Ciaran's mother, and of Corc, King of Munster, who removed the seat of Government in that Kingdom from the west side of the river Suir at Knockgraffan to the fort then called *sidh-druim* or Fairy Hill, and since and now called

¹ "Battle of Gabhra," published by the Ossanic Society, pp. 90-91.

Cashel, in the plain of Magh Feimhin. As this is the first encroachment on the southern part of the country "between the rivers," it will require here some short illustration. There can be no doubt that the removal of the seat of Government from Knockgraffon, on the west side of the Suir, to the hill of Sidhe Dhruim, now Cashel, was an attempt on the part of Core, to restore the "Erie of Feargus Scannal," by annexing the southern half of Ossory to his own kingdom of Munster. We have no account of this transaction, nor do we know whether the Ossorians submitted to his occupation of this part of their territory, or intercepted his further advances. But when Cormac MacCuilleanan, in pursuance of his ambitious policy, towards the end of the ninth century attempted to elevate Cashel to the dignity of the Metropolis of Ireland, he based his aggressive design on the following singular story, respecting the original foundation of that royal city:—

"Caiseal [is derived] from *cais-il*, i. e. a stone on which they used to lay down pledges, or *cis-aíl*, i. e. payment of tribute, from the tribute given to it by the men of Eire. Sidh-dhruim² was the name of the place at first.

"It happened in the time of Core, the son of Lughaidh, that two swine-herds frequented that hill for the space of a quarter of a year to feed their swine on acorns, for it was a woody hill. The names of those swine-herds were Durdru, the swine-herd of the king of Ele³, and Cularan, the swine-herd of the king of Muscraidhe⁴; and there appeared unto them a figure, brighter than the sun, with a voice sweeter than the angular harp, blessing

¹ "Cais-il," i.e. Tribute Rent. O'Donovan says this derivation of the word is also given in Cormac's Glossary. The term Caiseal, he adds, which is the name of many places in Ireland, as well as the ancient metropolis of Munster, denotes a circular stone fort. There can be no doubt that Core, King of Munster, erected a fort of this description on the rock when he changed its name from Sidh-Dhruim to Caiseal. Book of Rights, p. 28, 29, and 30.

² "Sidh Dhruim," i.e. Fairy Hill. It is highly probable from this having been the original name of the rock, that it had been long previously the site of Druidic worship.

³ "Ele." At that period the territory of Ele comprised the present baronies of Eliogarty and Ikerrin, in the county of Tipperary, and that of Ballybrit, in the King's county.

⁴ "Muscraidhe." This was the ancient name of the district afterwards and now called Upper and Lower Ormond.

the hill and the place, [and] predicting [the arrival of St.] Patrick, and it said :—

“ Good, good, good the man who shall rule Caiseal,
Walking righteously in the name of the Great Father,
And of the Son of the Virgin,
With the grace of the Holy Spirit ;
A comely, great, good Bishop,
Child of life unto judgment,
He shall fill noble angelic Eire
With people of each order of various grades,
To serve Christ the benign.

“The figure which appeared there was Victor,¹ the angel of Patrick, prophesying [the coming of] Patrick, and that the grandeur and supremacy of Eire would be perpetually in that place.

“ Accordingly that town is a metropolis to Patrick, and a chief city of the king of Eire. And the tribute and service of the men of Eire are always due to the king of that place, i. e. the king of Caiseal, through the blessing of Patrick, the son of Alplainn.”

Whether we accept this anecdote in its entirety, or otherwise, it is of importance, as it fixes the date of the foundation of the ancient city of Cashel. Corc, its founder, was the contemporary of Maine Cherr (whose sister he married) the father of Liedania, Ciaran’s mother, and also of Ruman Duach, the grandfather of the saint himself.

Ruman Duach was the ancestor of the celebrated clann known as the Ui Duach of Ossory, and from whom the ancient tribeland of Ui Duach, modernized Odagh, took its name. Ruman had eight sons, namely—Lughaidh, Cairbre, Ceallach, Ceanfaladh, Conaill, Muiredach, Reughadh, and Ubneadh.

Lughaidh, the first-named of those eight brothers, alone concerns our present purpose. With the other seven we shall take our leave for the present, merely remarking that, later in life, they were all converted to the Christian faith, two of them became bishops, and the whole were venerated as saints in the ancient Irish Church.

Ruman Duach, the father of those eight brothers, was a prince of

¹ “ Victor.” This was the name of St. Patrick’s angel. He is mentioned as such in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, and by Jocelin. Dr. Lanigan asserts that “there is no foundation for what we read in some of his Lives concerning his being often favoured with the converse of an angel, Victor.” See “Ecclesiastical History,” Vol. I., p. 144.

great distinction. His tumulus, or sepulchral pile, is still standing, near the old church of Ui Duach, or Odagh, in "Three Castles Demesne," four miles above Kilkenny, on the bank of the river Nore, and from it the ancient church of the tribeland there was formerly known as Tullach-de-Odagh, *i.e.* the Tulach or tumulus of Ui Duach. Ruman would be living till the year 345, when he would be succeeded by his son, now thirty years of age.

LUGHAIÐH, son of Ruman, and ninth in descent from Aengus Ossory. He was the eldest son of his father, as will appear lower down. He was contemporary with Nadhfrach, son of Corc, the second King of Cashel, and the first cousin to St. Ciaran's mother. He did not succeed his father in the Kingdom of Ossory. Early in life he left his father's Court; he migrated from his native tribeland to the south of the present county of Cork, then called Corca Laighe, now west Carberry. He there formed an alliance with a noble lady, the daughter of the local chieftain. The chieftain's name was Maine Cherr; his daughter's name was Liedania, and from the union thus contracted between Lughaidh, prince of Ossory, and Liedania, princess of Corca Laighe, was born the most blessed son Ciaran, the illustrious Bishop, whose life and labours shall form the sequel of this Memoir.

Of the history of Lughaidh (Lewy), subsequent to his marriage, little is known; but from what is known, he does not appear to have returned to his native tribeland of Ossory, but seems to have settled down in his wife's country. According to the chronology of the Ossorian pedigree, Lughaidh would be thirty years of age in the year 375, which same date is fixed by the same authority to be that of the birth of his son Ciaran. This same date is arrived at for the same event through the medium of his mother's pedigree, from Lughaidh Mac Conn, and the chronology of the legend of his life singularly corroborates the accuracy of both.

We have now brought our preliminary enquiries, both topographical and historical, to a close. We have arrived at the opening of Ciaran's mission. He no longer stands before us as an historical myth, but as a distinguished personage connected by birth and blood with many of the leading characters of his time. Corc, the founder of the city of Cashel, was his mother's uncle by marriage. Maine Cherr, prince of Corca Laighe, was his maternal grandfather. Aengus MacNadhfrach, first Christian King of Munster, was his second cousin. With some of

those we shall find him in active intercourse ; commanding with authority ; admonishing with dignity ; reprehending vice, and resisting intollerance.

We now proceed to the illustration of the beautiful Legend of our Saint's Biography. It is freely granted that its author, like the other writers of his time, indulge rather freely in the use of those bardic excesses so well calculated, and no doubt studiously designed, to excite the attention, and thus to live in the memories of an imaginative people, who, having cherished them as pious mementoes of the past, reproduce them in traditional recitations at many a fire-side scene : thus investing them with a degree of domestic romance, whence, without the aid of writing, much of our early history had been preserved, and has come down to us as some of the most interesting reminiscences in Irish lore. But those miraculous accompaniments with which the Life of St. Ciaran abounds, more embellish than invalidate the facts of the narrative ; and these facts, when denuded of their supernatural clothing, present to us the ordinary actions of an extraordinary man as richly elevated and adorned by the cordial credulity of the scribe as the saint himself was lifted in grace and intelligence above other men. But to reject those monuments of early Irish Literature, because of the pious exaggerations and bardic embellishments of the *schanachies* of those remote ages, would be to deny the existence of St. Patrick, St. Columbkille, St. Cainnech, and of most of our other Saints whose Lives are but so many tissues of miraculous occurrences. The advice of Dr. Todd can be here very advantageously introduced. "We ought," he says, "to use great caution in dogmatically rejecting as fable all that we find even in the midst of the most silly Legend. The facts are doubtless overlaid with childish stories ; but let us beware lest, if we cast out the rubbish without sifting, we should cast out also precious stones which have long lain concealed in the mass."

The following, from the pen of the Rev. James Graves, is equally *apropos* on the same point :—

"The miraculous agency introduced on the most trivial occasions, all through the Legends of the Irish Saints, is allowed to be fictitious by Dr. Lanigan, Alban Butler, and every Roman Catholic writer who has touched on the subject. But, granting all this, no nation in Europe can produce such a mass of curious matter containing so much historical and topographical information of extreme antiquity, interspersed, though it be, with

a set of Legends of the wildest extravagance. Our Irish hagiology is the work of men who loved home associations, and who borrowed little or nothing from the cold matter-of-fact tone of the Continental school."

CHAPTER V.

OPENING OF THE LEGEND OF CIARAN'S LIFE—HIS BIRTH—HIS YOUTH AND FIRST MIRACLE.

"*Beatissimus Episcopus Ciaranus sanctorum Hiberniæ Primogenitus.*" The most blessed Bishop Ciaran, the first born of the saints of Ireland, was a native of the western part of Leinster, in the district called Osraighe. All the Irish were anti-Christians and Pagans at the time. His father's name was Lughaidh, and was descended from the nobility of Osraighe. The name of his mother was Liedania, and was a native of Corca Laighe, in the western part of Munster. Before she conceived Ciaran she saw, in a vision, as if a star had fallen into her mouth, and she revealed the same to the Druids and learned men of her time, who informed her that she would bring forth a son who would be the greatest prodigy of his age, and whose fame and virtues would be spoken of to the end of time."

It is said that in both the physical and moral worlds "coming events cast their shadows before them." So it would seem that the mother of Ciaran had been favoured by Providence with an intimation of the future greatness of the child to whom she was to give birth. Similar presages are recorded of other distinguished characters, in various ages and countries. St. Patrick received an intimation of his future Apostleship when he heard, in a dream, the unborn children of Ireland invoking him to come and walk amongst them. Before St. Dominick had been born his mother dreamed that she had given birth to a dog, with a flaming torch in its mouth; and the learned Order of Preachers do not reject the story as fabulous, but recognise in it the prototype of their founder's mission. If a dog, with a torch, could foreshadow the zeal and fidelity of Dominick, how much more appropriate as a figure, and suitable in its aptitude as a comparison, would a star disclose the future mission and office of Ciaran, who, during the night of Pagan darkness enlightened, by his isolated brilliancy, all who came within the circle of his radiance. Brightly did he shine in the moral firmament, safely conducting all who looked up to him as a guide, never paling his effulgence, but, like the morning star, shone with renewed lustre, till he ushered in the dawn of that auspicious day when the illustrious Apostle of our Isle chased away

the clouds of Pagan darkness by the grand blaze of Gospel light which he shed on the land.

“After this the holy son, Ciaran, was born and nurtured in the island called Cleire, in Corca Laighe. And verily did God elect him in his mother’s womb [and the angels of God attended upon her at his birth]. The orders of Heaven baptized him.¹ His preceptor, as well as all who saw him, were astonished at his extraordinary size. His acts were virtuous; he was meek by nature, and his conversation pleasing. His works were prosperous and his counsels edifying, and he also excelled in everything pertaining to man.”

It might be here enquired if Ciaran was a native of Osraighe, how comes it that he was born in Cape Clere Island? Two reasons may be assigned. First—We can well understand the solicitude of the youthful lady for the safety of her expected offspring. Nor are we to be surprised if she entertained, from the prediction of the sages, some vague idea that she was soon to give birth to the “first born of the saints of Ireland,” and if, in consequence, towards the period of her delivery, she retired to the asylum of her mother’s house, she only followed the impulses that, under similar circumstances, are so frequently acted on at the present day. And thus Ciaran, though he might be called a native of Ossory, would be born outside of that territory. But the second cause, and I think the true one, why Ciaran was born in Finntract Clere, was that his father Lughaidh who, being married to the chieftain’s daughter there, was the first chieftain of Ossory who assumed the kingship of Corca-Laighe,² and was permanently residing with his wife in that country when Ciaran was born; and this conclusion will receive no small degree of confirmation from the next anecdote in the Legend.

ST. CIARAN’S FIRST MIRACLE.—“On a certain day that he was in the aforesaid place [*i.e.* Cape Cleire], and it was there that he performed his first miracle, whilst yet but an infant. A crow flew over him in the air, and descended and took up a small bird in its talons from its nest in the presence of Ciaran, and flew away and tore it open. Ciaran took compassion on the little bird, and felt grieved at what occurred; but the crow flew back again

¹ “Baptized him.” The words within [brackets] in this passage are taken from the “Corca Laighe.” See above, p. 13.

² “Corca Laighe.” See above, chap. vi., p. 30, for an account of how seven chieftains of Osraighe assumed the kingship of Corca Laighe, and seven kings of the Corca Laighe took the kingship of Osraighe.

and dropped the bird torn, and nearly dead, in his presence. Ciaran said to the bird, "Arise, and be whole," and the bird, by the grace of God, immediately arose and flew off to the nest again quite sound."

Ciaran would be probably from six to eight years old at the period of this occurrence. At an earlier age he could scarcely feel much sympathy for the grievances of the feather tribe, and as he was still in "the aforesaid place," *i.e.* in Corca Laighe, it proves that it was not for temporary convenience his mother retired there before his birth, but that this was then the permanent residence of his family.

The anecdote, like most of the others in the Legend, presents to us a simple natural action, which required no miraculous agency for its accomplishment. The greater bird may have dropped the small one either from accident or from some effort on the part of the youthful Ciaran for its liberation. Under his care the tiny creature soon recovered its former strength, and immediately took wing to its natural sphere of existence. The anecdote beautifully illustrates the tenderness of Ciaran's childish heart, his fondness for those little innocents of nature, and his abhorrence of cruelty to animals.

The next point suggesting itself at this stage of our enquiry, is the period of life at which Ciaran returned from his mother's to his father's country. From the first sentence of the last quotation, it would appear that he returned from Cape Clere island early in life. The words of that passage are—"On a certain day that he [Ciaran] was in the aforesaid place [*i. e.* in Cleire Island], and it was there he performed his first miracle, whilst yet an infant;" from which I think we may infer that when he ceased to be an infant, or early in his youth, he removed from the "aforesaid place," or from Cape Clere island, to the scene of his future life. But if Ciaran's father had been then permanently settled in his mother's country, for what purpose would he himself retire from his native place, and from his father's house early in youth, to another part of the country? Nothing beyond conjecture can be advanced on that point. It may be that Ciaran's father, who was the eldest son of Ruman Duach, would most probably be his successor in Ossory, if he had not retired from it early in life, and settled in another country. We have seen above (p. 30) that Ruman Duach in all human probability would be living till the close of the fourth century, at which period Ciaran would be approaching the thirtieth year of his age; and as his father had settled down, and become king

in his mother's country, he himself might be heir apparent to the throne of Ossory, on the death of his grandfather, Ruman Duach, to whose court he retired early in life, where, according to his biographer, he lived in the fullest enjoyment of bodily health. The Holy Spirit taking his abode in his soul, and in consequence of which he led a life of holiness and perfection. I will not undertake to say whether this be Theologically orthodox or the contrary. But the meaning of the Legend is this—that early in life Ciaran separated himself from the turbulence of the world—that he lived in pious seclusion, and delighted in the practice of those moral virtues inculcated by natural religion, silently considering and revolving in his mind the great truths of Providence, the evidences of which surrounded him; and by the pure light of reason he discovered that “the invisible things of HIM from the creation of the world, are being clearly understood by the things that are made—His eternal power also and Divinity.”¹ And his understanding being thus enlightened, he now despised the empty dogmas and silly rites of the Druidic religion, and yearning for a law more in consonance with his intellectual and moral susceptibilities, he hears with delight of the rapid spread of Christianity on the Continent, and he being now in the thirtieth year of his age, the real history of his life may be said to open.

¹ “Divinity.” Romans, cap. i v. 20.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. CIARAN'S JOURNEY TO THE CONTINENT—ITS DATE—ITS FEASIBILITY
—THE ARRIVAL OF ST. PATRICK AS A CAPTIVE IN IRELAND.

“Thirty years or thereabouts Ciaran spent in Ireland in the full enjoyment of bodily health before he was baptized; for all the Irish of that time were Pagans, as I have already observed; yet when the Holy Ghost took his abode in his chosen servant, Ciaran, he led a life of holiness and perfection in all his works during that time.

“But on learning of the spread of Christianity in Rome, he [Ciaran] left Ireland and proceeded thither, and was baptized there and instructed in the Catholic faith.”

The Roman journey of St. Ciaran is thus commemorated in the “Festilogium of Aengus,” compiled before the year 778. The interlining in Italics is the gloss, or illustration of the text, by the scholiast, Cathal Maguire:—

t ni tastach.

i.e. ni balbda t in hanerdaire.

Ro leblaing in balbda

i.e. desaire roling a chlu.

A Chlu dar sal sairde

i.e. do Roim resaid Ciaran he iar techmna t comdail.

Carthach rigda ruamach

i.e. do dal Birnd do osraigib do Chiaran.

Ciaran Sluagach Saigre

Thus translated by Mr. Hennessy:—

or not silent.

i.e. not stuttering or not undistinguished.

“Bounded [leaped] the stutterer

i.e. from him eastwards his fame leaped.

His fame across the salt [Sea] eastwards.

[with a woman.

i.e. to Rome Ciaran sent Cartach after coming into contact

The royal Cartach, the Romish.

i.e. of the Dal Birnd of Osraigh was Ciaran.

The multitudinous Ciaran of Saighir.”

Mr. Hennessy, who kindly transcribed this stanza from his copy of the “Festilogium,” thus illustrates the scolia: “Over the words *in balbda*

(the stutterer), occur the two glosses, *ni balbda, not dumb* or *not stuttering* and "*ni tastach,*" *not silent*, which shows plainly that "*in balbda*" in the original should be "*ni balbda,*" not dumb, or not stuttering, or not silent. By which the scholiast designed to imply the use of language in an eminent degree, or that Ciaran was not undistinguished for eloquence. Hence the stanza thus illustrated and denuded of its scolia, reads thus :

The eloquent man bounded [or leaped]
With his fame over the sea eastwards,
The royal Cartach, the Romish,
The multitudinous Ciaran of Saigher.

Ciaran and Cartach are here commemorated together, not that both travelled together to Rome, but that they are both honoured together on the same day. Ciaran is said to have gone with his fame over the sea, that is, he carried with him (or as the Glosiast has it) he sent the renown of his youthful virtue before him across the sea, in contradistinction to Cartach, who travelled (as the Glosiast does not fail to tell) as a penitential pilgrim. The Roman journey of Ciaran is further sustained by the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, said to have been written by St. Evin, before the end of the sixth century, and by the Life of St. Declan, apparently written towards the beginning of the tenth ; and we have now to enquire respecting the date of his departure from Ireland.

The story of the Roman journey of St. Ciaran is held to be apocryphal, and its performance is smiled at as impracticable ; yet it will turn out to be one of the most probable, and the least difficult of accomplishment, of any of the events narrated in his life. It is not necessary to assume that Ciaran's voyage over the seas was either miraculous or extraordinary. We are not asked to believe, as the legend of Brendon's Life tells, that he traversed the ocean on a whale's back ; nor are we to suppose that it was necessary for Ciaran to fit out a *Curach* of his own, and with a pair of paddles, to plough the surf of an angry sea in search of some continental harbour. That Ciaran had heard of the spread of Christianity in Rome, is not improbable ; but whether he had or otherwise, we have in the history of the period assigned for his emigration, strong national stimulants to prompt him on an expedition of enterprise and venture. Ciaran was born in the year 375, and he attained the 30th year of his age in A.D. 405, the precise year in which Niall Niaghallach, or as he is better known in English, Niall of the Nine Hostages, was

slain on the banks of the Loire, in France. Various authorities quoted by Keating and O'Flaherty, record the great military ardour of the Irish during the reign of this monarch, and how, incited by martial enterprise, they fitted out numerous armadas to harass the coasts of Gaul—one passage from Keating will suffice :—

“Niall, encouraged by the success of his arms [against the Britons], resolved upon another expedition, and accordingly raised a gallant army of his subjects; and having prepared a sufficient number of transports, and a competency of provisions, weighed anchor with his victorious Irish, and steering his course directly to France, had the advantage of a prosperous gale, and, in a few days, landed upon the coasts. He immediately set himself to spoil and ravage the country near the river Loire.”¹

Niall, soon after his debarkation, was killed by an arrow aimed at him from the opposite side of the Loire, by a young Irish Prince, who had followed for that purpose. All the chronologists place this event under the year 405, at which date Ciaran had just attained his 30th year; when, we are told, he undertook his journey beyond the seas and what surprise that a man of his mind, and in the maturity of his youth, should feel the influence of the national enthusiasm, then raging for maritime adventure, and ranging himself under the standard of his monarch, would seek with him in foreign climes, if not military distinction (which he probably did not value) new and enlarged views of human intercourse and social life: as well as an acquaintance with the political laws and civil institutions of other countries. O'Flaherty says that Niall was killed on the Armoric shore of the Loire. Lanigan contends that Niall's fleet did not enter the Loire, but sailed into the small river below Boulogne. But this controversy does not concern our purpose. It is sufficient for us that the same year in which Ciaran emigrated from Ireland, an armada was then fitting out to sail for the coast of Gaul, and whether Ciaran's design in quitting his native shores was to study the science of a soldier or a saint, it will not be questioned that he took his departure with the monarch of his nation, and that under his banner he landed on the continent of Europe.

Before we take our departure with Ciaran from the shores of Ireland, the following observations of Dr. Lanigan arrest our attention :—

“I find,” says the Doctor, “in Keating but one expedition of Niall to the coasts of Gaul; nor has O'Flaherty but one expedition of his to that

¹ “Loire.” History of Ireland, Vol. i., p. 156. Carson's Edition.

country, so that how many soever might have been his or the expeditions of the other Irish Chiefs against the maratime parts of Great Britain, this against Gaul must have been the one in which St. Patrick was made captive¹.

Against this statement of Lanigan's, starts up the almost unanimously assigned date for Patrick's captivity, namely, the ninth year of the reign of Niall of the Nine Hostages; and, as he commenced his reign in A.D. 379, the year 388 has been adopted as the date of the captivity of St. Patrick. All the authorities concur in making King Niall and his forces invade the country of Britain in the ninth year of his reign, and as St. Patrick was then believed to have been a native of that Island, he was said to have been carried captive by the invaders on their return to Ireland. This is very decidedly advanced by Jocelin²:—"Patrick," he writes, "was a native of Britain, living in the village of Taburnia, (that is, the field of the tents, for that the Roman army had there pitched their tents), near the town of Emphthor, and his habitation was nigh unto the Irish Sea. Having attained his sixteenth year, he was, with many of his countrymen, seized by the pirates, who were ravaging those borders, and was made captive and carried into Ireland." Whence we see that the ground upon which the ninth year of Niall's reign had been fixed on as the date of Patrick's captivity, was that he had been believed to have been a native of Britain; and as Niall ravaged Britain in that year, it must have been the same in which Patrick was made captive. But St. Patrick was not a native of Britain, but of Gaul; and as there is no authority to show that the Irish forces under King Niall invaded Gaul earlier than the year 405³, there is no ground whatever for assigning the captivity of the Irish Apostle to an earlier date; and consequently we have now before us the highly-important coincidence, viz.: that the same year in which Ciaran left Ireland for Rome, one of the vessels of Niall's fleet, which after his death ravaged the western

¹ "Made captive." Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 1, p. 137, et seq.

² "Jocelin." Chap. i.

³ "Year 405." The error respecting the native country of St. Patrick has been long since corrected; yet, strange to say the chronology of his life which had been based on this erroneous data still remains unaltered. Thus we are told that he was 120 years old at his death, because he was 16 at the date of his captivity, which was said to have occurred in A.D. 388, and as he was believed to have died in A.D. 492 he should have been 120 years at that time. But as the captivity did not take place till A.D. 405, when he was 16 years old, even if he lived till 492, he would then have only attained the hundred and third year of his age.

coast of Gaul, carried, on its return to Ireland, its future Apostle as a captive. And here we have the true relationship in point of age between the two saints, for Ciaran was 30 years old when he sailed from Ireland, and Patrick was 16 years when he was taken captive ; hence Ciaran was born fourteen years before Patrick, which fixes A.D. 389 for the birth of the Irish Apostle.

We may fairly assume that on the death of King Niall, in Gaul, the Irish armament broke up or became greatly disorganised ; and it may be safely inferred that many of those who had followed its fortunes to the Continent, never again returned to Ireland. That Ciaran accompanied the Irish fleet to Gaul will hardly admit of a doubt, and if he had heard of the spread of the Christian religion before he had left Ireland, he had now presented to him the opportunity of studying it both in theory and practice, for Gaul was then a Christian country. Barbarian warriors have often been captivated and subdued by the sublime teachings and consoling promises of the Gospel creed. What marvel, then, that a youth of Ciaran's moral and intellectual capacities, and who had been destined to live in the hagiology of his country as the " first-born of her saints," should become enamoured with, captivated and subdued, on first beholding the majestic form of that grand dispensation that was then shedding light and civilization on the world ; and abandoning the companions and avocations of his voyage, he proceeded in quest of the source of the thought and life which at that moment infused into his soul a new vitality. That he travelled on that mission to the Continent we have proved by the highest authorities, and that he possessed the amplest opportunities for accomplishing the voyage, is now clearly established.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. CIARAN IS SAID TO HAVE REMAINED SOME TIME IN ROME—WAS THERE ORDAINED BISHOP—ON HIS JOURNEY HOMEWARDS MET ST. PATRICK IN ITALY, AND ORDAINED HIM PRIEST.

“But on learning of the spread of Christianity in Rome, he [Ciaran] left Ireland and proceeded thither, and was baptized there and instructed in the Catholic faith; and remained there for the term of twenty years, reading and studying the holy Scriptures, collecting books, and storing his mind with the laws and rules of the Catholic church.”

“But when Ciaran’s wisdom, chastity, devotion, and faith became manifest at Rome, he was accordingly ordained and sent back to Ireland to preach the Gospel. On his way he met St. Patrick, Archbishop of Ireland, and as the holy men met together, they rejoiced exceedingly. St. Patrick was not bishop at that time, although he afterwards was, for it was Pope Celestine ordained him Archbishop, and sent him to preach the Gospel to the Irish.

“Although there were other saints in Ireland before St. Patrick’s arrival, yet God reserved for him the Archbishopric and conversion of the natives; and the kings and chieftains did not receive the Christian faith from any any other till his arrival. St. Patrick said to Ciaran—“Proceed before me to Ireland, and you will meet a well in a solitary spot, in the central part of the country, and erect a monastery for yourself at that well. The name of the well is Uaran, and your name will be held in veneration there till the resurrection of the dead.

“Ciaran replied, and said—“Tell me where is that well situated?” and Patrick said to him—“The Lord Himself will guide thee; and take this very small bell with you, which will not ring until you reach the well; and in thirty years I will follow you to that place, and they blessed and greeted each other; and Ciaran proceeded on his journey to Ireland and St. Patrick remained in Italy.”

St. Ciaran left Ireland in the year 405, and as he remained twenty years in Rome, his return thence is fixed at the year 425. It is usual to find the writers of the Lives of the Irish Saints of that period confounding every part of Italy with Rome, and thus our author asserts that St. Patrick was ordained archbishop by Pope Celestine, and sent to preach to the Irish, whereas it is certain that St. Patrick was not

ordained either in Rome or by Pope Celestine.¹ In the same way he tells us that Ciaran remained twenty years in Rome; was there ordained bishop, and sent back to Ireland to preach the Gospel. That Ciaran remained twenty years in Italy; that he had visited Rome, and that it was his presence there, and his departure thence, that first suggested to the authorities of the Apostolic See the idea of effecting the conversion of Ireland, may be freely granted. But that he received there episcopal ordination, and a commission to preach the Gospel in Ireland is not only doubtful, but is directly contradicted by Prosper's Chronicle, which asserts that Palladius was the "first Bishop sent from Rome to the Scots believing in Christ." Nor does Aengus in the stanza quoted above, p. 69, say that Ciaran went to Rome, but only that he "went over the sea eastwards." That Ciaran remained twenty years in Rome, we shall immediately disprove, though the particular year in which he left it, if he had been there, we cannot determine, further than that it was before the year 418. On his journey homewards, he visited one of the greatest schools of that age in Italy, and where we shall now leave him, "studying the scriptures, collecting books, and storing his mind with the laws and rules of the Catholic Church," whilst we return to the history of St. Patrick, since we left him a captive in Ireland.

We have seen that the same fleet in which Ciaran sailed from Ireland to Gaul in the year 405, carried Patrick on its return a captive to Ireland. He passed about six years here in servitude, and about the year 411, regained his liberty, and effected his escape to his own country. The interval between the return of Patrick from captivity and his promotion to the Irish mission, is said to be a period of great confusion in the history of his life. Dr. Todd rejects all that is recorded of it as contradictory and fabulous. Dr. Lanigan, with more judgment, analyses its different versions, and reduces the whole to the following statistics:² Soon after his return from captivity, the future Apostle of Ireland spent

¹ "Celestine." See this point beautifully illustrated in a highly valuable and interesting paper contributed by the Rev. (now the Most Rev.) Dr. P. F. Moran, entitled "Notes on St. Patrick." See Irish Ecclesiastical Record, October, 1866.

² "Statistics." See Dr. Lanigan's criticism on the different versions of St. Patrick's life at that period by his several biographers. Ecclesiastical History, Vol. i. c. iv.

some few years under the preceptorship of St. Martin,¹ of Tours. He next returned home, and spent some time with his family, during which he was carried away captive a second time.² His captivity on this occasion does not appear to have been of long duration, and after it he put himself under the direction of St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, acting under whose advice, he retired about the year 418, to an island in the Mediterranean sea, not far from the western coast of Italy, then called Lerinensis or Lerins, now St. Honorat, where there was then a distinguished school, from which came many of the eminent men of that age. St. Patrick is said to have spent nine years in this island, from which he returned to Auxerre about the year 427, where he continued under St. Germanus till the time of his appointment to the Irish mission. The date, A.D. 427, fixed on for the return of Patrick to Auxerre rests on the following basis. Patrick retired to the school of Lerins, under the advice of Germanus, but this advice could not be given before the year 418, as down to that date Germanus had been an officer in the Roman army in Gaul, and was in that year consecrated bishop of Auxerre; and if this was the year in which he directed Patrick to go to the school of Lerins, and if Patrick remained there for nine years, he should return from it to Auxerre in the year 427. But it is singularly opportune for our purpose that the Tripartite³ Life of Patrick has but *seven years* in this island; and Ussher⁴ quotes a passage from Tirechan in which Patrick is said to have spent *seven*

¹ "St. Martin." Patrick was taken captive in 405, and as he remained six years in Ireland he must have returned to the continent about the year 411, at which date St. Martin of Tours had been fourteen years dead, so it is a gross mistake to say that the Irish Apostle studied under him after his return from captivity. But Patrick may have been an *alumnus* of the school of Tours after its founder's death, and in that way may be said to have been a disciple of St. Martin himself. (See Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints of Nov. 11.) St. Martin's sister is said to have been St. Patrick's mother; whether that be so or not some such relationship must have existed between the two saints, and from which sprung that high degree of reverence entertained at all times by the Irish people for St. Martin of Tours.

² "Second time." Dr. Todd rejects the story of the second captivity of Patrick. He holds that the only foundation for it is that the mariners, with whom Patrick crossed the sea and travelled for two months through a desert, at the end of their journey detained him in custody for sixty days, which some of his biographers have made a second captivity. See "St. Patrick," p. 375.

³ "Tripartite." L. 1, c. 34.

⁴ "Ussher." "Septem annis ambulavit et navigavit in fluctibus et in compestribus locis et in convallibus montanis, per Gallias atque Italiam totam, atque in insulis quæ sunt in Mari Tyrrheno, et ipse dixit in commemoratione laborum." Pr. p. 835.

years partly in islands of the Tuscan Sea, and partly elsewhere. The term nine years is supported by the "Third Life" and by Probus.¹ But the Tripartite and Ussher, on such a point, are as likely to be correct, and if they be it will follow that Patrick returned from Lerins to Auxerre in the year 425—the same year that Ciaran was leaving Italy on his return to Ireland.²

If we denude the vocation of the Irish Apostle of its miraculous amplifications and investigate it as a purely historical proposition, we trace it to its source in the interview between himself and St. Ciaran in Italy. This conclusion, or the data on which it will be found to rest, in no way interferes with that event being a supernatural phenomenon, by which Patrick received from God a special vocation for the conversion of Ireland. I am now dealing with the direct or natural cause of Patrick's journey as a missionary to this country. In none of St. Patrick's Lives is there any authority to show that he had made up his mind to return to Ireland anterior to the date of his interview with St. Ciaran. In his "Confession," written towards the close of his life, St. Patrick mentions his visions or dreams relative to the Irish mission after his return from exile. No one will deny that these had been the foreshadowing on his soul of the great apostleship with which he was to be subsequently invested. But we shall be able to show that the vision or dream, which finally induced him to undertake the Irish mission, occurred after the date of the interview between himself and St. Ciaran; we now submit from original authorities the history of St. Patrick's acceptance of the Irish apostleship.

We are informed by the scholiast on Fiach's hymn³ that

"Germanus was bishop of a city called Auxerre, and Patrick applied himself to study under his guidance."

Eric of Auxerre, in his life of St. Germanus, gives us, in a few words, sure data from which to calculate the date at which Patrick first placed himself under the guidance of Bishop Germanus, thus:

"Patrick, who was the chief apostle of Ireland, and *spent fourteen years*⁴

¹ "Probus." "Permansit cum insularis illis novem annis." L. 1 c. 1.

² "Ireland." Ecclesiastical History, Vol. i. p. 170.

³ "Fiach's Hymn." Trias Thaum, p. 5. Dr. Todd, in his Memoir of St. Patrick, says the author of these scholia is one of the earliest of Patrick's biographers.

⁴ "Fourteen years." Dr. (now the Most Rev. Dr.) Moran, from whose work on the Early Irish Church I have made this extract from Eric of Auxerre

under the most holy tutorship of Germanus, and drank in no small share of learning regarding the heavenly scriptures at the very source of their rich fountain."

As Patrick left Germanus for Ireland in A.D. 432, fourteen years from that date bring us back to A.D. 418, the first year of the episcopacy of Germanus, from which it follows that Patrick applied to that bishop immediately after his elevation to the See of Auxerre.

In the second life, by Colgan, we find the following passage:—

"Crossing over the British Sea he¹ [Patrick] sought a certain holy man, the head of the Church of Gaul, the bishop of Auxerre, by name Germanus. It was in the island of Lerins² that Patrick was instructed by Germanus; he was then thirty years of age."

It is granted that Patrick was forty-five³ years old at his episcopal ordination, which took place in the year 432; consequently he should have attained the thirtieth year of his age in A.D. 417, one year before the elevation of Germanus to the See of Auxerre. It is not inconsistent therefore to say that he was thirty years in A.D. 418, when he was sent by Germanus to the school of Lerins; he may not have attained his 31st year, and therefore might be correctly described as being then but thirty years old.

We have now ascertained three important points in our enquiry, viz.: First.—That Patrick first sought the guidance of Germanus in the year 418; secondly, that the future apostle was at that date thirty years of age; and thirdly, it was St. Germanus, who had directed Patrick to go to the school of Lerins. We have now to submit the history of his journey to that island, and of his vocation there for the Irish mission. The passages to be now quoted are taken from the two most trustworthy of Patrick's biographers, whose accounts of this period of his life, when used in illustration of each other, clear up much if not all the difficulties with which that great occurrence was supposed to be surrounded. The first passage is from the "Tripartite," as translated from the Irish

thus observes on it in a marginal note: "The numeral XVIII., which is found in the printed text, is a clerical error for XIV." This error greatly puzzled Dr. Lanigan. See his notes on it in Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I. p. 164, note 75.

¹ Crossing over the British Sea." This refers to Patrick's voyage on his return from captivity in Ireland.

² "Island of Lerins". From this passage it is clear that the education of Patrick in the school of that island was carried on under the direction of Germanus, who, in consequence, must have been perfectly cognizant of the tutor under whom Patrick was then studying.

³ Forty-five years." See this point discussed by Dr. Todd. "St. Patrick," p. 392, *et seq.*

text by Eugene O'Curry,¹ and the events therein recorded are to be referred to a date immediately following the elevation of Germanus to the See of Auxerre, in A.D. 418, at which period Patrick had been about seven years returned from his captivity in Ireland.

"Patrick took leave of Germain [his tutor] then, and he [Germain] gave him his blessing, and there went with him a trusty senior from Germain to take care of him, and to testify to him—Segitius was his name and a priest in orders; and it was he that performed the offices of the church under Germain. Patrick went then upon the sea, nine in his number. It was then the tide cast him upon an island, where he saw a new house and a young couple in it, &c., &c."

This is the account given by our author of the departure of Patrick from St. Germanus, in Auxerre, for the island of Lerins where, with nine other students, Germanus had directed him to pursue his studies in the school of St. Honoratus. Germanus sent one of his most trusted priests, named Segitius, to introduce him, and bear testimony to his fitness, for what office we shall see lower down. It is to be noted here that Probus makes Germanus send this priest, Segitius, to accompany Patrick to Rome. But this is a mistake of that writer, resulting from the fact that he did not know it was by the direction of Germanus that Patrick had gone to Lerins. According to Probus it was an angel who had commanded Patrick to go to the "Island between the Mountains and the Sea," and that it was only after he had spent nine years in that island that he first met Germanus. But this mistake we shall soon make more apparent. The Tripartite Life then goes on to narrate a beautiful anecdote in illustration of the history and origin of the ancient Irish Relic known as the "Bachal Isa," or Staff of Jesus, which we shall here rapidly summarise, as its details do not concern the subject of our enquiry. Patrick entered the "New House," and was told by the young man that himself and his young wife had been living there since the time our Saviour was on earth, when he visited them there, feasted with them, and prophesied the coming of Patrick to that island, and informed them that he (Patrick) should go preach to the Irish, and the young man then said—

"And he left a token with us, namely, a bent staff, to be given to thee. 'I shall not receive it,' said Patrick, 'until he himself gives me his staff.' Patrick stayed there three days and three nights with them; and he went then to Mount Heremon, in the neighbourhood of the island, and the Lord

¹ "O'Curry." See Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Irish History p. 601.

appeared to him there, and said to him, to come preach to the Irish, and that He would give him the Staff of Jesus; and he said that it would be a deliverer to him in every danger, &c., &c."

How much of this story may be fact, or how much pious fiction, we will not stop here to enquire. But as the "Staff of Jesus" was St. Patrick's crozier, it is here spoken of only as symbolical of the offer then made to him for the first time of the Irish Apostolate. Probus, who gives a more detailed account of what happened on Mount Heremon, does not say that God there gave Patrick the Staff of Jesus, but only invited him to go to Ireland, and that he should be its chief bishop; which proves that the offer of the "bent staff" was nothing more than an invitation to him to go to Ireland and to become its chief bishop. How long Patrick remained on this island is not stated. The "three days and three nights" which he is said to have passed in the "new house," may have been, and probably was, the duration of his stay there. Then departing from the young couple he went to Mount Heremon, in a neighbouring island: and here it is of importance to note that the account which Probus gives of St. Patrick's call to the Irish mission just commences where the Tripartite ends. It is not stated above why Patrick left this island and went to Mount Heremon. Probus, however, tells us that an angel had so commanded him. And we shall now, without interruption, allow this ancient author to tell in his own words, the result of Patrick's visit to Mount Heremon:

"The angel of the Lord again appeared to Patrick, saying, 'go to St. Senior, the bishop who lives on Mount Heremon, at the right hand of the sea of the ocean, and his city is entrenched with seven walls.' When he [Patrick] came there, he remained some days with him. Then the same bishop ordained him a priest, and read with him a considerable time. Whilst he was tarrying there on a certain night, he heard in a vision the cries of children who were in Ireland, crying out from the breasts and wombs of their mothers—'Come, holy Patrick, save us from the wrath to come.' In the same time, the angel said to him—'Go to Ireland and thou shalt be the Apostle of that Island.' Patrick answered—'I cannot go, because the men who dwell in it are perverse.' The angel then said 'go.' Patrick then replied—'On the other hand, I cannot go unless I shall see the Lord.' Patrick therefore went with nine men and he saw the Lord."¹

Patrick then poured forth those prayers to the Lord:

¹ "Saw the Lord." The continuation of this story by Probus, besides being foreign to the object of my enquiry, is so grossly fabulous and historically false

“O Lord Jesus Christ! who has directed my footsteps through the Gauls and Italy into these islands, lead me, I beseech thee, to the Holy See of the Roman Church, that receiving there authority to preach with fruit Thy word, that through me the people of Ireland may become Christian.”

Taking the subject matter of these extracts in its consecutive order, and denuding it of its supernatural embellishments, the naked facts therein recorded are clearly these :—Germanus sent Patrick with nine other students and his own priest, Sigitius, to the school of St. Honoratus, in the island of Lerins. In the voyage they were shipwrecked, or by some other accident, Patrick was washed on the shore of a neighbouring island in the Tuscan sea, when he lost the companionship of his fellow travellers. But after an interval of three days, when the nine students and the priest Segitius had arrived at their destination, and had reported the fate of their companion Patrick, a messenger, designated an angel by Probus, was despatched from the school of St. Honoratus to this island, in quest of the lost student, and now, for the first time, the “bent staff” or the Irish Episcopate is spoken of. Patrick proceeds with this messenger to Mount Heremon, where he again meets his nine companions, and is introduced to Bishop Senior, who after “some days” ordains him priest, and subsequently super-

that its insertion above would only interrupt the course of our narrative; but as its omission might leave us open to the charge of garbling our extracts we therefore supply the part omitted here.

Then the Lord said to Patrick, ‘Come to my right hand,’ and Patrick went to the right hand of the Lord. The Lord then said to him, ‘Go into Ireland and preach there the word of Eternal Salvation.’ Patrick replied: ‘Three petitions I ask of Thee, O Lord, that the men of Ireland may be rich in gold and silver, and that I may be their patron, and that after this life I may sit at Thy right hand in Heaven.’ The Lord said to him, ‘Patrick thou shalt have as thou hast petitioned, and moreover, they who shall make a commemoration of thee, either by day or by night, shall not perish for ever.’ [Patrick, therefore, arising came to Ireland, when the islanders though they could not resist the ordination of God, despised him as he preached by day as well as by night.] Patrick then poured forth these prayers to the Lord.” See the prayer in the text above.

Why this very prayer shows he was not in Ireland. Patrick then set out on a journey from Ireland to Rome, and on his way spent some time with St. Germanus, of Auxerre, who on Patrick’s departure for the Holy See, sent with him one Segitius, a presbyter.

The most credulous student in Irish hagiology will not receive the story of Patrick being invited by the Lord to come and sit at His right hand, with the rest of the colloquy between the Lord and himself, as more than the romance or religious fiction with which the writer designed to embellish his narrative. And as to St. Patrick setting out on a journey to Ireland, and being there despised by the people, and his return thence to Rome to seek for authority to again return to Ireland and preach there the Gospel with greater fruitfulness, the story is so grossly erroneous, that it is not necessary here to attempt to disprove it. St. Patrick made but one journey as a missionary to Ireland, and in that he was not despised by the people. Dr. Lanigan endeavours to screen his

intends his education for a considerable time, during which time Patrick is invited in a vision and commanded by an angel to go to Ireland, and here the questions at once suggest themselves who was this Bishop Senior who ordained Patrick priest, and with whom the future Apostle continued to study for a "considerable time;" and why was Patrick sent to this bishop by Germanus? And why was it that it was under Bishop Senior's tuition that Patrick was first importuned, and finally consented to undertake the conversion of Ireland?

Much has been written respecting the locality and the person of this Bishop Senior.¹ The Bollandists suppose him to have been bishop

favourite writer, Probus, from the responsibility of this groundless statement, by supposing that the folios of his manuscript were misplaced or deranged. But no derangement in the pages of a book could produce a certain affirmation or proposition, if such proposition had not previously existed in the work. Dr. Todd, however, accepts this story of St. Patrick proceeding to Ireland after his interview with the Lord, as a "ray of light shining in the midst of darkness," which proves to him that Patrick undertook the conversion of Ireland without receiving any commission from either Celestine of Rome, or Germanus of Auxerre. But the learned Doctor would have been more fortunate in his speculations had he used this anecdote of Probus to prove what he elsewhere labours, and I think successfully, to establish, namely, that as Patrick and Paladius have each been known by the name of Patricius, in the ignorance of the times, and through the errors of transcribers, the two personages have been frequently confounded, and that in consequence many of the events 'attributed to St. Patrick belong to the lost acts of Paladius;' and hence that portion of the extract from Probus, enclosed within [brackets] in the preceding passage, is to be understood of the unsuccessful mission of Paladius to Ireland, and here erroneously introduced into the Life of St. Patrick.

That Patrick did not travel to Ireland on this occasion; that he was not there rejected by the people, and that he did not then return to Rome, are all satisfactorily established by the expressions of the prayer which he addressed to God, after he had consented to go to Ireland; but which we are erroneously told by Probus he used after he had been rejected by the Irish. This prayer begins thus—"O Lord! who didst guide my path *through the Gauls and Italy into these islands*, lead me, I beseech Thee, to the Holy See of the Roman Church," &c. Words cannot be clearer to show that the speaker was still in one of those "islands" in the Tuscan sea, in which he had been ordained priest, and where he had just then consented to go to Ireland. The beautiful sentiments of this prayer but ill accord with the childish stories by which it is surrounded.

¹ "Bishop Senior." Dr. Todd's enquiries regarding the person and country of this bishop have resulted rather unsuccessfully. He takes up a suggestion of Colgan's, that the name of this prelate may have been Senator, not Senior, who is described as a "*Presbyter*" only, and who resided somewhere in Italy not well known. Dr. Todd suggests that though he is named a presbyter he still may have been a bishop, and if he was he may have conferred priest's orders on Paladius, but not on Patrick. In another place the learned author allows Patrick to have been ordained priest by Bishop Senior, in which capacity he set out on his mission to Ireland; but here he divests him of even the sacerdotal function and confers it upon Paladius, and consequently according to our learned theorist the future apostle undertook the conversion of Ireland without being ordained or commissioned by any one. See the theories advanced by this erudite writer to meet the difficulties of the present case. "St. Patrick," pp. 336-343.

of Pisa, for which they appear to have had no other ground than the proximity of that city to the Tuscan sea, in which the island of Lerins is situated, where Patrick had been residing. Dr. Lanigan,¹ after much enquiry, could find no bishop named Senior, in either Gaul or Italy; but suggests, with his usual penetration, that "perhaps the Senior of Probus is not to be taken as a proper name, but as signifying *aged or old*." Strange, indeed, that so clear an investigator should arrive thus near to the object of his research, and then refuse to recognise its discovery. If senior means "aged or old," the learned Doctor could find who that old bishop was by opening the "Tripartite" at page 133, where, amongst the Irish Saints St. Patrick met on the continent, we have—

"Sextus antem Senex Kieranus de Sagir,

But the sixth was old St. Ciaran of Sagir."

Ciaran is here designated old, not that he had then attained advanced age, for he was at the period but forty-three years of age; but because when the Tripartite was being written, the word "senior" was the descriptive epithet by which "Ciaran of Saighir" was distinguished from "Ciaran of Cluain;" and this nominal characteristic of the elder Ciaran is still more distinctly asserted in the "Genealogy of the Corca Laighe,"² in which the writer after recording the conversion of "The Chieftain who first believed in the Cross in Ireland," adds—

Augus is e Ciaran sindsor naem Erend.

Thus translated by Dr. O'Donovan:

And Ciaran is the SENIOR of the Saints of Eire.

Hence, when this memoir of St. Patrick was being compiled, "*S. Senior Ciaranus episcopus*" was Ciaran's proper designation, and Probus, or some transcriber after him, either by accident or design, allowed the word "Ciaranus" to drop out of the passage, thus forcing the qualifying adjective to form the proper name of the bishop. What a flood of light this sheds on the subject of our enquiry; and how interesting the relationship thus early established between the two patriarchs of the Irish Church.

¹ "Lanigan." Vol. i. p. 166.

² "Corca Laighe," p. 22-3.

CHAPTER VIII.

PATRICK CONTINUES HIS STUDIES WITH BISHOP CIARAN—PROBABLY HAD RECEIVED MINOR ORDERS ANTERIOR TO HIS JOURNEY TO LERINS—ENQUIRY RESPECTING THE LOCALITY OF MOUNT HEREMON—THE VISION OF PATRICK INTRINSICALLY AUTHENTIC—THE ANGELIC MESSAGE NOT SO—PATRICK HESITATES TO ACCEPT THE IRISH APOSTOLATE—HE IS IMPORTUNED AND FINALLY ACCEPTS IT—HE LEAVES LERINS FOR AUXERRE—HIS INTERVIEW WITH GERMANUS—HIS SEPARATION AND PARTING WORDS WITH BISHOP CIARAN.

It is to be apprehended that the reverential feeling entertained for the name and memory of our national apostle may be somewhat hurt by the result of our enquiries at the close of the preceding chapter, and some may even go so far as to consider it a disparagement to have Patrick ordained priest by, and to have him pursue his studies under, the tutorship of Bishop Ciaran. But the claims of St. Patrick to the veneration of the Irish people do not rest on his social status anterior to the date of his apostleship ; but on the fact that to him, under God, is to be attributed the conversion of the kings, chieftains, and tribesmen of our nation, and that whilst in many other lands which had been copiously watered with martyr's blood, the faith for which they shed it is now extinct; in Ireland the faith that was planted by Patrick without a martyr being crowned still blooms in youthful vigour and unfading verdure, and the circumstance of his having been called and ordained priest for this apostleship by an Irish bishop beautifully illustrates the ways of Providence, and so far from detracting from, really enhances his claims to, the affectionate gratitude of the Irish race. Yet it would seem from what we know of the subsequent history of the two saints, that during their stay in the school of Lerins, that they should be looked on as fellow-students, one the senior of the other, mutually assisting, edifying, and instructing each other, and both acting under the mastership of Bishop Germanus, who, from his church in Auxerre, was apparently the presiding genius of that institution.

Probus says that Patrick had been only some days with Ciaran when he ordained him priest, but that after that event he continued "to read under him for a considerable time." In connection with this point Dr. Lanigan quotes authorities to show that according to the ecclesiastical discipline of that age a postulant for Holy Orders could

not be ordained priest till he should have attained the thirtieth year of his age.¹ We have just seen that Patrick was thirty years old in A.D. 418, the same year in which St. Germanus sent him to the school of Lerins, and he was accordingly there but a few days when he was ordained priest by Bishop Ciaran, whence it would follow that Patrick had passed through his preparatory course of studies, and also that he had received the minor orders before he had applied to Bishop Germanus, otherwise Bishop Ciaran could not have ordained him priest in so short a time, as is expressed by the term of "some days." In the year 418 Patrick had been seven years returned from his captivity in Ireland. Of these he probably gave three at home with his family. He is said to have spent four years in St. Martin's monastery at Tours,² where we are also told he received Tonsure, and probably the other inferior orders, and thus when he applied to Germanus at the end of the four years' study the latter directed him to Lerins, where he was at once raised to the priesthood. How long Ciaran had been in this establishment before the arrival of Patrick we have no means of determining. If he had made his studies in Rome, and was there ordained bishop, as his biographer asserts, he must have left it as early as the year 417. On his way homewards, probably for the purpose of perfecting his education, he visited the great school of St. Honoratus, where, by a providential arrangement, he met St. Patrick in A.D. 418, and ordained him priest. And here the most singular coincidence in the respective chronologies of the two saints presents itself. Ciaran was then thirteen years out of Ireland, and as he was to be about twenty years absent he has to remain still seven years more, which bring us to A.D. 425 as the date of his return. Patrick, according to the Tripartite, has to remain seven years in this island, and as he entered it in the year 418 he will leave it to return to Auxerre in A.D. 425, the same year in which Ciaran is to return to Ireland. Hence we can conclude that the period which elapsed from the ordination of Patrick to his return to Auxerre was "the considerable time" which Probus says "he continued to read under" Bishop Ciaran, and that was about seven years.

¹ "Age." Lanigan, Vol. i., p. 164.

² "Tours." Dr. Todd admits Patrick may have been, as is recorded of him, the nephew and disciple of St. Martin of Tours. See "St. Patrick," p. 787. According to Probus, St. Patrick spent four years with St. Martin, who gave him the Clerical Tonsure. Lib. i. c. 14.

It was during this period of seven years, and apparently soon after Bishop Ciaran had advanced Patrick to the priesthood, and whilst the two saints were mutually entertaining themselves in studying the scriptures, and in storing their minds with the rules and laws of the Catholic Church that Patrick "on a certain night heard in a vision the cries of children who were in Ireland crying out from the breasts and wombs of their mothers, "Come, holy Patrick, and save us from the wrath to come." This vision of our apostle is related with some slight modification by all his biographers, and he himself bears testimony to its authenticity by recording it in his "confession," written towards the close of his life. In this vision the saint beholds the unborn children of Ireland imploring him to come and save them, by carrying to them the truths of salvation, thus presenting to him that sublime motive to undertake the Irish mission, which has inspired all the evangelizers of our race to rise superior to all human considerations, to face dangers, and sacrifice life with alacrity, to carry the blessings of redemption to those who still sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Probus continues, "And in the same time, *i.e.* of the vision, "the angel said to him, "go to Ireland and thou shalt be the apostle of that island." Patrick answered, "I cannot go, because the men who dwell there are perverse." The angel said, "go," and Patrick replied, "On the other hand I cannot go until I shall see the Lord," &c., &c.

We are to draw a marked line of distinction in point of internal authenticity between the vision of St. Patrick and this message alleged to have been delivered to him by an angel. In the vision the salvation of future generations is proposed as the motive and object of his mission to Ireland. In the message from the angel he is told that if he would go to Ireland he would be made the chief bishop and apostle of that nation, which rises no higher in its aim than would be suggested by human ambition or the attainment of ecclesiastical power and authority, objects which it would be preposterous to suppose an angelic messenger would hold out as inspiring motives for the conversion of a nation. But we should remember that Probus, who tells this story of the angel's message to Patrick, has already told us that it was this same angel that had directed him to go to the island of Lerins, and we have seen above that both the *Vita Secunda* and the *Tripartite* expressly affirm that it was Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, who had so directed the future apostle. Now it was the same angel

who had directed him to the island of Lerins that now commanded him to go to Ireland, and that he should be its chief bishop, but, as in the former case, that angel was Bishop Germanus, so in this case the office or promise of being the apostle or chief bishop of Ireland came from Germanus also. Probus denominates Bishop Germanus an angel, most probably after the example of St. John in the Apocalypse, where each of the bishops of the seven churches of Asia-Minor is designated "The angel of the church of Ephesus," &c. In the same sense Germanus was angel of the church of Auxerre.

The next point of enquiry in our narrative respects the locality of Mount Heremon. Dr. Lanigan,¹ has expended much valuable research in looking out for Mount Heremon on a rock in the Atlantic ocean. But the Tripartite expressly states that Mount Heremon was in the neighbourhood of the island on which Patrick had been washed ashore; and Probus as expressly asserts that it was on Mount Heremon Patrick was ordained priest and where he continued to study for a considerable time after, and the prayer which Patrick himself addressed to God after he had consented to go to Ireland, conclusively proves that he was still in the same island in the Tuscan Sea. The words of the prayer are, "O Lord, who hast directed my footsteps *through the Gauls and Italy into these islands.*" Words cannot be clearer to show that the speaker was still in one of the islands in the Tuscan sea, and that he had travelled there from the north-west of France "through the Gauls and Italy," and as we have indisputable proof that it was in the school of St. Honoratus, in the island of Lerins, that Patrick was educated, Mount Heremon, and all that is said about its seven walls by Probus, are a mixture of truth and fiction, intended by the writer to dignify the school in which our apostle was educated, and the effect of which has been to puzzle posterity.

It is singular that it did not occur to Dr. Lanigan, nor to any one of the other writers who have touched on the subject, that Heremon is an Irish word and the name of the founder of the Milesian Monarchy—that it is variously written *hEremon*,² *Earmon*, &c.—that in writing it

¹ "Lanigan." Ecclesiastical History, Vol. i. p. 166.

² "Heremon." The derivation of the word Erean, or Ireland, from Heremon, is most opportunely shown in an ancient *ran* preserved by the Four Masters under the year 940, thus: '*Luise Ereann Eremoin.*' Thus translated by O'Donovan: "The flame of Eremhons Ireland," clearly proving that Eremmon, or Heremon, is the root of the word Erean or Erin.

the m is punctuated in sign of its muteness, and that in its pronunciation the sound is Hereon or Erean, whence comes our words Erean, Erin, &c. Hence the directions of the angel to Patrick should read thus, Go to Bishop Ciaran, who lives in Erean (or who is from Erean) 'at the right hand'¹ or western extremity 'of the sea of the ocean,' i.e. the Irish Sea, which joins the Atlantic ocean at its northern and southern extremities, 'and his city is entrenched within seven walls.' That is his castellum in Erean is so fortified, which may be understood of the fortress or mansion-place of the Kings of Ossory, as it stood in the tenth century when Probus was compiling this biography.² And as Ciaran's name was to be omitted from the memoir, and he himself transformed into St. Senior, bishop, so the word "mount" was invented and prefixed to Erean, and both then lifted to the dignity of a city, fortified by seven walls, &c. Probus, who, it is to be regretted, encumbered his valuable narrative with such an exuberance of pious fiction, tells us that it was by the direction of an angel that Patrick went to St. Senior or Bishop Ciaran in Heremon, whence it will follow that whoever the personage was who had directed Patrick to repair to the school of Lerins must have been aware that Bishop Ciaran was then studying in the same house, and that it was with the object of being introduced to him that Patrick had been ordered there. Now, we have it on the authority of the "Vita Secunda" and of the "Tripartite" that it was by the special direction, and with the blessing of Germanus of Auxerre, that Patrick proceeded to the school of Lerins, so that the words put into the mouth of an angel by Probus are those

¹ "Right Hand," i.e. the south side of the sea of the ocean. It is probable that Probus, in making up this story, did not attend much to the points of the compass, nor refer to the "Irish Sea" or any particular sea, his object being to decorate to the extent of his fancy his memoir of the Irish Apostle. According to Dr. Lanigan, Probus is the Latinised form of *Coeneachair*, the Abbot of Slane, who was burned to death in the round tower of that church by the Danes in A.D. 950. Ecclesiastical History, Vol. i. p. 83.

² "This biography." That the account of the ordination of St. Patrick, and all that is said respecting St. Senior and his city on Mount Heremon, by Probus, is a garbled form of an older record, appears from its own internal testimony. For if "Senior" had been the name of a bishop then residing on Mount Heremon, he could not be designated "St. Senior" during his own lifetime. We shall see, lower down, that when Germanus sent Patrick to Pope Celestine he did not say "go to St. Celestine," but "go to Celestine, the successor of St. Peter," because Celestine was not then a canonized saint. But Probus, when compiling the biography of St. Patrick to suit his own purposes, modified, with excessive license, the original narrative of the saint's vocation for the Irish mission, and Ciaran, senior, being then venerated as a saint in Ireland, he makes him a saint also when he was a bishop in the school of Lerins.

that should be attributed to Germanus, as it was he and not an angel that had so directed Patrick, whence it clearly appears that when the future apostle first sought the guidance and obtained the patronage of the Bishop of Auxerre, that prelate learned from him the history of his captivity in Ireland, and knowing that an Irish prince was then studying in the school of Lerins he directed Patrick to go there to Bishop Ciaran, of Erean, and he sent with him nine other students and his own confidential priest, Segitius, who was to bear testimony to his fitness for the Irish mission. But all this was much too plain and matter-of-fact for the panegyrists of our apostle, whose fertile imagination found no difficulty in converting Germanus into an angel, and Bishop Ciaran, of Erean, into St. Senior, Bishop of Mount Heremon, a city entrenched within seven walls, &c., &c.

It would be preposterous to suppose that the education of Patrick, by Ciaran, had any other object for either of the two saints than the conversion of Ireland. So long as Ciaran remained in the school of Lerins, Patrick studied under him with delight in that asylum of learning. Here they read together the Canons, studied the Scriptures, collected books, and imbibed wisdom under the guidance of the great Bishop of Auxerre. But the time has come for Ciaran to return to his own country, and this formed the crisis which produced Patrick's hesitation, which resulted, no doubt, from his humility forcing on him the conviction of his unfitness for so great an undertaking. And it was now that Germanus, or a messenger from him, importunes Patrick to go to Ireland, that God would bless his mission, and that he would be the chief bishop and apostle of that nation. Patrick's reply—"I cannot go because the men are perverse who dwell there"—was no doubt suggested by the recollection of the harshness which he had experienced when amongst them as a captive. But Germanus finally gives to Patrick the emphatic command "go," and to the pressure of this order his hesitation yields. He now only requires "to see the Lord," and then himself and the nine students who had travelled with him from Auxerre "went forth to see the Lord," which can imply no more than that they performed some form of devotion for the purpose of ascertaining from God if it was the will of Providence that Patrick should accept the apostleship of Ireland, or what appears more probable, that having now accepted that onerous mission they pray for light and grace to guide him through its performance, for the very

beautiful prayer preserved by Probus, which Patrick addressed to God on this occasion, clearly proves that he had then finally accepted the Irish apostleship, for the petition of the prayer is not an invocation for light to guide him in his decision, but he prays that God who had guided his path through the Gauls and Italy would now lead him to the Holy See of the Roman church, there to receive authority to preach the Gospel in Ireland.

It is significant that all our authorities concur in making Patrick visit Bishop Germanus in Auxerre anterior to his visit to Rome. The scholiast on Fiach's Hymn says when he, Patrick, had received the angelic vision calling on him to go to Ireland he applied to St. Germanus for advice. Consequently he must have proceeded to Auxerre, not to Rome, after leaving the island of Lerins. It is certain from the sentiments of his prayer, just illustrated, that Patrick's first impulse, after he had consented to go to Ireland, was first to proceed to Rome there to receive his commission from the Sovereign Pontiff. Why, then, did he alter his design and repair to Auxerre not to Rome? The reason is manifest on the face of the narrative. St. Ciaran, who was now returning home after his twenty years' absence, being anxious that Patrick, whom he had educated and ordained priest for that purpose, should accompany him to Ireland, dissuaded him from going to Rome, telling him that Germanus was the papal legate in Gaul, that their road to Ireland would conduct them into the city of Auxerre, the See of the episcopate of Germanus, and that a commission received there from him to preach the gospel in Ireland would be as plenary in its privileges as one received from the Sovereign Pontiff himself. The illustrious reputation and well-known attachment of the great bishop of Auxerre to the Roman See would fully justify such a representation on the part of Ciaran, who thus induced Patrick to accompany him homewards. All the circumstances connected with the interview between the two saints in Italy, with the education of Patrick under Ciaran, and with Germanus's encouragement of the Irish Mission in Gaul, fully sustain this view of the case.

Then, as now, the great highway from Rome to Ireland lay through Northern Italy, from Ravenna westwards through the late Sardinian States to Eboria, now Ivrea, a small town at the foot of the Alps, and thence through Gaul to the north-west of France, and this road con-

ducted both Patrick and Ciaran into the town of Auxerre.¹ Ciaran was an Irish prince, he was also a Catholic bishop, and are we to suppose that at a time when Palegenism was raging in Gaul and Britain, and that Ciaran was traveling from Rome to Ireland, he would pass by the Church of Auxerre without entering to greet and communicate with the great Gallican bishop—then the illustrious defender of Catholic orthodoxy in Gaul, and subsequently the great promoter of Christian missions to Ireland. This may be advanced as certain, that the remarkable interest which Germanus subsequently manifested for the christianization of Ireland, and which so intimately associates his memory with its accomplishment, must be traced to the period of Ciaran's journey homewards, and from what cause could it more probably or naturally arise than from an interview with Ciaran as he passed through the city of Auxerre, on his return to Ireland; when he presented Patrick, whom he had ordained priest, to Germanus for episcopal ordination, and plenary authority to preach the Gospel in Ireland. And the very words which Fiach's scholiast records Germanus to have used on the occasion pre-supposes some such application to have been made to him in favour of Patrick. "Go," said Germanus to Patrick, "Go to the successor of St. Peter, namely Celestine, that he may ordain thee, for this office belongs to him." Do not the words "this office belongs to him"² clearly imply that Germanus had been previously importuned to confer "*this office*" of the Irish apostleship on Patrick? And then the words which the biographer of Ciaran puts into the mouth of Patrick on the occasion of their separation as clearly

¹ "Auxerre." See a highly interesting notice of the road by which St. Patrick travelled through Italy and Gaul. Irish Ecclesiastical Record, October, 1866. Notes on St. Patrick, from the polished pen of the Most Rev. Dr. Moran.

² "This office belongs to him." It will be here fairly enquired if what has been advanced above respecting the anxiety of Germanus that Patrick should accept the Irish mission be founded on fact, how are we now to understand his commands to the contrary? That circumstance will admit of this explanation. It must have been the intention of Bishop Germanus from the beginning that Patrick should obtain his commission from the Holy See before undertaking the conversion of Ireland. This was also Patrick's own intention as we learn from the sentiments of the prayer which he addressed to God after he had consented to go to Ireland (see above, p. 81); and it was for not acting accordingly that Germanus now commands him to go to Celestine and receive his commission, for, he adds, "This office belongs to him." The question of the Roman mission of St. Patrick does not lie within the province of religious polemics; it is only in modern times it has been so situated. Archbishop Ussher, Sir James Ware, and other such eminent Protestant authorities all maintain that our apostle received his commission to preach the Gospel in Ireland from "the holy See of the Roman Church."

imply that they had previously intended to accompany each other to Ireland. "Proceed before me to Ireland," said Patrick to Ciaran, "and you will meet a well in a solitary spot: erect a monastery for yourself at that well, and in thirty years I will follow you to that place;" and then, adds the biographer, "They blessed and greeted each other, and Ciaran proceeded on his journey to Ireland and St. Patrick remained in Italy."

The progress of St. Patrick in Italy, subsequent to the departure of Ciaran for Ireland, does not concern the subject of this enquiry; we shall, therefore, leave him about the year 425 to pursue his studies under the direction of his great master, Germanus, and take our departure with Ciaran for the shores of Ireland. But before we start, there is one point in the parting address of Patrick to Ciaran which here requires a short illustration, viz.:

THE THIRTY YEARS' PROPHECY.—St. Patrick, after telling Ciaran to build his house on the brink of the well, "Uaran," added, "and in thirty years I will follow you to that place, *i.e.* to the locality of the well. In the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick the conversation between himself and Ciaran is thus related:—"Old St. Kieran, of Saigher, asked St. Patrick, on their meeting, where he should fix his abode and build a monastery; to whom the holy man replied that beside the river [fluvium], called Huar, he should build a monastery, and that there he would meet him after thirty years." The compiler of the Book of Lecan, or of the Corca Laighe,¹ preserved in that MS., asserts that "Ciaran had taken Saighir thirty years before Patrick arrived," and he thus continues—"For the poet said:"

"Saighir the cold
Found a city on its brink,
And at the end of thirty pleasant years
I shall meet there and thou."

But this *ran* no more than proves that Patrick promised to meet Ciaran at the well within thirty years from the date of their conversation. But it does not follow thence, as the writer of the "Corca Laighe" would have us believe, that Saighir was to be founded thirty years, or ten years, or any definite number of years previous to the visit of Patrick there. The scholiast on Aengus at the 5th March, also quotes this *ran*, though in a rather modified form. The *ran*

¹ "Corca Laighe. See above, p. 13.

itself was originally most probably composed by Cormac MacEledach "the scribe of Saighir," of whom see above p. 18. The scholiast says, "Patrick prophesied concerning Ciaran of Saighir :

" Saighir the cold, Saighir the cold,
Build a city upon its brink,
After thirty full fair years
We shall meet there, I and thou."

This "prophecy," as it has been called, has been so misinterpreted by Irish writers, as well those who have rejected it as fable and those who have accepted it as fact, that Patrick is represented therein as engaging to open his mission in Ireland in thirty years after the date of the delivery of the prophecy, and as Patrick arrived in Ireland in the year 432, Ciaran has been therefore said to have founded Saighir in the year 402, or thirty years before Patrick had arrived in Ireland. But no one version of the "prophecy" gives any foundation for such a conclusion. In each of the passages quoted Patrick promises to meet Ciaran at the "solitary spot," or at the "well," or at the "river" in thirty years. We shall see below that Patrick did visit Ciaran at Saighir in the year 455. We have seen above, chap. VIII. that the two saints separated in Italy in the year 425. And thirty years from that separation in Gaul to their meeting in Saighir bring us to A.D. 455. That Patrick did actually deliver this "prophecy" I do not undertake to prove. But if he did we can affirm that he fulfilled it to the letter.

CHAPTER IX.

ST. CIARAN'S RETURN FROM THE CONTINENT—HIS FIRST MISSION IN IRELAND—THE WELL "UARAN" TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF "SAIGHIE"—DERIVATION AND MODERN FORM OF THE WORD "UARAN"—CONVERSION OF THE OSSORIANS.

"Patrick said to Ciaran, 'Proceed before me to Ireland, and you will meet a well in a solitary spot. Erect a monastery for yourself at that well. The name of the well is Uaran, and your name will be held in veneration there till the resurrection¹ of the dead.'"

"Ciaran replied and said, 'Tell me where is that well situated?' and Patrick said to him, 'The Lord himself will guide thee; and take this very small bell with you, which will not ring until you reach the well, but when you do it will ring with a charming and melodious sound.' This well [continues the writer of the legend], about which we have just spoken, is situated in a solitary district on the borders of Munster eastwards, and northwards of Leinster. Yet it is in Munster that Eilie lies, and it is there that Ciaran intended first residing as a hermit, for the locality was surrounded by large woods at the time."

It must be admitted that with the exception of Ciaran's own biographer not one authority accessible to the writer gives the least clue to the medium or the date of his return from the continent. According to the legend of his life he remained twenty years in Rome, and, according to our enquiries in the preceding chapter those twenty years expired at Auxerre in A. D. 425. Travelling in that age must necessarily have been both perilous and protracted, and if our saint visited St. Germanus at Auxerre in company with the future apostle of Ireland, the communings of the three holy men must have considerably retarded his journey homewards. At the period of which we are now writing there existed a very considerable intercourse and means of communication between the continent and the British Islands. It was in this year 425 that the second devastation recorded by Gildas happened, in which the Irish and Picts, after the Roman legion had been recalled, broke down the earthen barriers erected from Dunbarton to Edinburgh, and laid waste the lands of the Britons. The latter solicited the aid of Valentian the Third, who sent over to their assistance a new auxiliary legion from Gaul.¹

¹ "From Gaul." See Ogygia, Healy's translation, Vol. ii. p. 350-353.

The following year, 426, the stone wall was erected from Dunbarton to the Clyde, on the site of the earthen rampart just referred to; castles were built by the Romans at intervals, to command a prospect of the sea, but in the next year 427 the Roman army was recalled from Britain, and accordingly we find King Dathie of Ireland immediately after invading Gaul and leading his victorious army to the foot of the Alps. Here he was killed by a thunderbolt in the year 428, after which his Irish legion returned home carrying his body with them for interment in Ireland.¹

I give these few statistics for the purpose of showing the comparative facility with which Ciaran might have returned from the continent in any one of the three years which succeeded his interview with St. Patrick in 425, and, indeed, if the meeting with Germanus in Auxerre be granted, it might be safely inferred that his departure from that great bishop would be neither abrupt nor hasty, and consequently the most probable date to assign for his return to Ireland would be 428, when he accompanied the army of King Dathie, after the death of their chieftain at the foot of the Alps in Gaul.

We now enter on the illustration of our saint's mission after his return to Ireland, as furnished by his own biographer.

The passages quoted from the *Legend of Ciaran's Life*, with which this chapter opens must be severely taxed with designed partiality towards the interests of the ecclesiastical institutions of Saighir. It may be granted, and for obvious reasons, that Patrick would have suggested to Ciaran the necessity of erecting his monastery or church in the vicinity of a spring or current of water; but that he would direct him to go in search of a well in the centre of the island, and there, in the solitude of the woods, to open his mission is not only the opposite of how Ciaran acted, but, besides its improbability, such a course of action would be the most effectual means of retarding the conversion of his own relatives. Ciaran was himself a prince of Ossory, and he returned home a missionary to his own people. Ireland was then subject to a powerful pagan priesthood, and is it probable, under such circumstances, that Ciaran, after twenty years absence from his native land, would, on his return home, turn his back on his father's house and on the scenes and companions of his youth, amidst whom,

¹ "In Ireland." Id. p. 350, 351.

and protected by his own social influence, the germ of the faith could be planted and guarded from pagan turbulence till it should have attained such strength as to defy the malice of its enemies. The story of Patrick directing Ciaran to go in search of a well in the centre of the island and of Ciaran proceeding thither immediately after he had landed in Ireland, and of the miraculous chiming of the bell when he arrived at the well Uaran, are but so many interesting anecdotes of imaginary events studiously arranged to illustrate the reputation of the "Barcon Ciaran" and to establish thence the right of the Church of Saighir to precedence over that of any other church in Ossory. According to the legend, Ciaran, "on landing in Ireland, the Lord directed his footsteps straight towards the well, and on reaching it the little bell rang quickly with a most melodious clear sound."

But, besides its natural difficulties, this story is irreconcilable with the sequel of the narrative, from which we shall see that Ciaran must have been long in Ireland after his return from Rome, before he had founded the church of Saigher; this will be obvious from the following passages taken from our authors account of Ciaran's first visit to Saighir.

"When Ciaran first arrived here [*i.e.* at Saighir] he sat beneath the shade of a large tree. There was no one with Ciaran at the time, *for it was unknown to his disciples* that he came to this hermitage."

And again, lower down,

"After this [*i.e.* after the formation of the community] *his own disciples with a great many others*, came to Ciaran, and he contemplated erecting a magnificent monastery, and the aforesaid [*i.e.* his original disciples in Saighir] remained with him and became his domestic servants."

And further on, we are told,

"A young lady came opportunely to Ciaran and he converted her, and built her a neat little cell close to the monastery, and *he invited other holy virgins to visit her.*"

These quotations clearly disprove the story of Ciaran having proceeded directly to Saighir after he had landed in Ireland, as well as the miraculous discovery of the place by the chiming of the bell. For where, in this midst of a pagan nation could Ciaran procure "other holy virgins" to visit this lady, who is represented as his first female convert. And if it be true that after debarking in Ireland he was miraculously guided across the country till he arrived at Saighir,

what are we to understand by his going there *unknown to his disciples*, and of those same disciples, and a great many others, gathering around him as soon as they had discovered the place of his retreat? Whence, it is evident, that previous to the foundation of the Church of Saighir, Ciaran had been governing elsewhere in Ireland an ecclesiastical establishment, with a retinue of students, whom he had been training for the missionary life. The next point in our enquiry concerns the locality of Ciaran's first missionary college, also who were those students that there lived under his guidance, and what caused the retirement of Ciaran from the first scene of his mission to live as a hermit amidst the solitude of the woods of Eilie, where his retreat having been discovered, his scholars again flocked around him; whence followed the ancient monastic foundation of *Saighir Ciaran*, now Seir-Kieran. But first we are called upon to make some enquiries respecting the name and locality of the well "Uaran."

"Patrick said to Ciaran, 'Proceed before me to Ireland; you will meet a well in a solitary spot. The name of that well is Uaran.' 'This well,' [says the writer of the Life] 'is situated in a solitary district on the borders of Munster eastwards, and northwards of Leinster, and is universally called Saighir Chiaran.'"

Besides other difficulties attending this anecdote, some rather grave objections start up to impugn its veracity. St. Patrick, at the time of this conversation, had been fourteen years out of Ireland, and as he spent but six years in this country, and those in a menial capacity in the north of the island, what knowledge could he have of a well in a solitary spot, with the geographical details which he gives of its situation, and how did he know that its name was "Uaran"? The writer of the Life found all such difficulties superable by the introduction of miraculous agencies. But even if we admit of such interferences as admissible in the present case, we have still to confront this great discrepancy between the directions said to have been given by St. Patrick, and the history of their fulfilment by St. Ciaran—viz., that the name of the well to which we are told Ciaran was miraculously guided across the country after his arrival in Ireland was not "*Uaran*" but "*Saighir*." It is true the author of the Life says, "This well is now universally called Saighir Ciaran." But if Ciaran went direct to the well "Uaran" and there erected his church, why has not the site of that church been called "*Uaran Ciaran*?" Saighir must

have been the proper name of the well or locality before Ciaran had arrived there, as Achadh-bo had been the proper designation of that place, before St. Cainnech had there erected his church. But since and from him the site of that church has been called "Achadh-bo-Cainnech." And it was so at Saighir, from the building of his church there, this place has been called Saighir Ciaran. But if the name of the well there had been "Uaran" at the time of Ciaran's arrival, its subsequent title would be *Uaran Ciaran*.

Is this story of the well then a fabrication of the "scribe of Saighir"? It cannot have been, for it is found in a simpler form in an older authority, and the author of Ciaran's Life only appropriated it, having first fitted and embellished it to suit the exigencies of Saighir in his day. In the Tripartite¹ Life of St. Patrick, compiled within the sixth century,² the directions of Patrick to Ciaran are thus recorded :

"Old St. Kiaran of Saigher asked St. Patrick on their meeting where he should fix his abode? To whom the holy man replied (*quod juxta fluvium Huar appellatum*) that by the river called Huar he should build a monastery."

Thus in the oldest authority on the subject, Huar was not the name of a well, but the proper name of a river. The name of this river is variously written Huar, Uaran, Fuaran, which are, apparently, but modifications of Heoir, Eoir, and Feoir, three different forms of the ancient name of the river Nore. This river must have been from the remotest time a leading feature in the physical geography of the kingdom of Ossory. In the "Book of Rights,"³ and in the Annals of the Four Masters, the name of this river is variously written *Eoire* and *Eoir*. In an ancient *ran* preserved in the "Martyrology of Donegal"⁴ it is named *Heoir*, and in O'Heerin's Topographical poem the valley of this river is described as

"The fair wide plain of the *Feoir*."⁵

Thus the river Nore has been indiscriminately denominated from

¹ "Tripartite." P. 130.

² "6th Century." See O'Curry's dissertation on the age and writer of the Tripartite. Lectures on Manuscript Materials of Irish History, p. 166, et seq.

³ "Book of Rights." P. 89. See this point discussed above, chapter I. part II.

⁴ "Martyrology of Donegal," at the 11th March. In the Irish text the form of the name is "*Heoire a Laoighis*," which is thus rendered into English—*The Eoir in Laoighis*.

⁵ "Feoir." Transactions of Kilkenny Archæological Society, 1850—supplement, p. 7.

remote times the Heoir, the Eoir, and the Feoir, apparently the original Irish forms of the Latin words Huar, Uaran, and Fueran, the names of the river by the side of which Patrick had directed Ciaran to build his church.

But granting that Huar and Heoir are identical in origin, it will be fairly asked what knowledge could Patrick have of a certain river of that name in the south-east of Ireland, he having been then fourteen years out of that country? It is both rational and probable, if not certain, that Patrick, who had spent so much of his youth in this foreign island, would, on meeting with a native prince of that country, ask him to what part of the island he belonged; to which Ciaran would reply that his tribe were seated in the valley of the Heoir, and if Ciaran did converse with Patrick at the time of their separation, respecting the building of a church or the establishment of a community, the future apostle would naturally counsel him to open his mission amongst his own people, and to erect his church by the side of the river, which he had mentioned to him as the Heoir, and which was subsequently and designedly corrupted into Huar. "Go," said Patrick to Ciaran, "go to the river called Heoir, and there you shall build a church, and there your name shall be held in veneration till the resurrection of the dead." And to the valley of the Heoir (*i.e.* the Nore) Ciaran did proceed, on his return to his native land, where he appeared, in the midst of his own tribesmen, the harbinger of a new civilization. Here, robed in the ecclesiastical costume of the age, he planted the cross in view of the *Ard-righ's* mansion,¹ and with episcopal authority, eloquently invited the chieftains and tribesmen of his race to renounce the religion of the Druids, and to embrace the creed of which that cross was the symbol. Endowed by nature, with faculties of commanding influence over others, and gifted by grace with a superior degree of light and intelligence, the bright example of his life and the sublime teachings of his doctrine soon confounded the philosophy of the Druids, and subdued the turbulence of his clan. Here, on the banks of the Nore, surrounded by his disciples, he now chants his morning psalms, beneath the sylvan shade of those sacred groves till then dedicated to pagan rites. He

¹"Ard-righ's Mansion," *i.e.* the head chieftain's house. The writer holds that the kings of Ossory, who are frequently styled *Righ Reighna* and *Righ Gabhran* kept their principal fort or mansion on the site of the present Castle of Kilkenny.

now stands on the brink of the holy wells of Druidic worship, and converts them into fountains of Christian regeneration. He boldly enters the mystic circles of heathen superstitions, and carves on their noble pillar stones¹ the sacred emblem of human redemption. This was the opening scene of Ciaran's mission, and here was erected the first Christian temple, that was raised in Ireland—the representative of which was still standing down to the end of the last century, and has been described as “the old chappell near Kieran's well.”² Here also he opened the first Christian seminary, that had been founded in Ireland, into which soon flocked the youth and more matured of his clan, who, submitting to his discipline, and modelling their affections, by the principles of his teaching, soon became his colleagues in the mission: and from the *alumni* of this primitive school, came forth distinguished bishops and eloquent preachers, the first evangelizers of Ossory, and who, having been the first converts of Ciaran's mission, are here entitled to a short historical commemoration.

¹ “Pillar Stones.” One of the stones Ciaran is believed to have so carved still exists in his mother's country on Cape Clear Island. According to the Corca Laighe, “Here was dwelling the chieftain who first believed in the Cross in Ireland.” See Smith's History of Cork, b. 11, c. 4.

² “Chappell near Kieran's well,” quoted from Bishop Otway's “Visitation Book,” by Rev. James Graves. “History, Antiquities, and Architecture of the Cathedral church of St. Canice,” p. 3, n.b. The old chapel stood inside of the present public market as you enter it from King-street; and St. Ciaran's well is still flowing outside of the market wall in the adjoining yard, to the south, as we shall prove in detail lower down. Do this chapel and well on the west bank of the river Heoir preserve to us the site of the Church which Patrick directed Ciaran to erect by the side of the river called Huar?

CHAPTER X.

THE HOUSE OF ST. CIARAN—THE SAINTS OF HIS SCHOOL—THEIR PEDIGREES—THEIR FESTIVAL DAYS—THEIR CHURCHES—THEIR DISPERSION.

There is no event in Irish history more sentimental in its surroundings, or more interesting in its details, than the opening of St. Ciaran's missionary school, in the midst of his own people. This primitive college is denominated by Colgan, from the "*Sanctilogium Geneal*," which he quotes, "*THE HOUSE OF ST. CIARAN*," and was most certainly the religious establishment or monastery, which, on his return from the Continent, he founded, as Patrick had directed him, "by the side of the river called Heoir." Of this primitive house we have preserved no other memorial than the names of some of the saints, who had studied in its school; nor do we know ought of its constitution or rules. But as Ciaran had been trained in the great school of Lerins, we may be sure that when he returned home, and opened a school in his own country, he shaped it on the model of that in which he had graduated. In the school of Lerins were associated many of the eminent men of the age, such as "*SS. Honoratus, Cassianus, Cesarius, Eucharius*; and with them in that monastery were blessed *Lupus, and Germanus*, "*who in conformity with their rule, sang the same liturgy*," &c; and on the same, or a similar plan, Ciaran appears to have established his monastery in Ireland. In this school, and on the same principle as in that of Lerins, were associated with him "*the saints of his house*," amongst whom were the bishops *Aengus, Aduanus, Sinel, Erc., &c.*, and with them the seven saints, the sons of *Ruman Duach*, "*who, in conformity with their rule, sang the same liturgy*," &c. Living in community, those holy men moulded the capacity, directed the instincts, and shaped the popular sentiments of their time; and the civilising influences of their teaching soon manifested itself in the almost immediate conversion of the Ossorian tribe.

The following extract from Colgan's *Acta SS.* may be advantageously introduced here:—

"The *Sanctilogium Geneal*, recounts the genealogies of fourteen saints, who derive their origin from the House of St. Ciaran or the family of Ossory. To these the Calendar of Cashel, at the 10th June, adds a brother

Benedict. Now the aforesaid Sanctilogium, cap. 12, thus deduces their genealogies:—

“St. Ængus Laim-iodhan, son of Flann, son of Barindh, son of Finnchadh, son of Deghadh, son of Dronadh, son of Buan, son of Eochaid, Leth-trein, son of Amalgadh, son of Laoghire, Birn-buadhach, son of Ængus Ossory, son of Crimthan Mor, son of Erc, &c.

“St. Aduanus, son of Eochadh, son of Aedh, son of Coemghan, son of Malladh, son of Dronadh, son of Buan, &c., as above.

“St. Ciaran of Saighir, son of Luaghne, son of Ruman Duach, son of Conaill, son of Corprea, son of Nia Corb, son of Buan, &c., as above.

“SS. Corbrea, Kellach, Kennfaladh, Bishop Conaill, Muireadh, Rughaidh, and Ubneadh Bishop, seven sons of Ruman Duach, son of Conaill, &c., as above.

“St. Erc, Bishop, son of Fergna, son of Feolchadha, son of Aldodha, son of Bressal, son of Muredacha, son of Crimthan Mor, son of Erc, &c.

“St. Sinall, Bishop, son of Aedh, son of Scanlain, son of Fincha, son of Ruman, son of Ængus Ossory, &c.

“St. Finnchea v. daughter of Dagaes, son of Dunlangha, son of Fethcellah, &c.

“To them the Calendar of Cashel, at the 10th June, adds St. Benedict son of Luaghne, son of Leth-trione, son of Birn, of the dal Birn of Ossory. Coarbh, or successor to Enda of Aran, and brother to Ciaran of Saighir. He is the *papa* whom they say is in the island of Aran. Here in the genealogy of this Benedict the aforesaid Calendar omits certain descents, which are recorded above in the genealogy of St. Kieran.

“But as regards the festival days of the aforesaid saints, we are to observe from the Martyrology of Tallaght, the Calendar of Cashel, Marianus, and the Martyrology of Donegal, that St. Ængus was venerated on the 16th February, St. Ciaran on the 5th March, St. Erc on the 27th October, St. Maelfadh, 31st January, St. Sinell, 12th January or the 11th November, St. Finnchea, the 9th November.”

We are to distinguish the saints of the house of St. Ciaran from those of the family of the Ossorians; by the former we are to understand the saints of his school, who were both his converts and relatives; by the latter such native saints of Ossory as had been venerated to the knowledge of the writer of the Sanctilogium. With the saints of the “house of St. Ciaran” we are alone concerned. Their pedigrees are very imperfect. The following table, compiled from the above genealogies, will show the relationship in which they stand to St. Ciaran. We give the Latin of the passage from Colgan, as a foot-note below, at p. 110.

Genealogical Table, showing the relationship between St. Ciarran and the Saints of his "House."

Crimthan Mor				
Aengus Osrainche,				Muredacha.
Leoghaire Birn Buadhach			Ruman,	Blank.
Amalgachadh			Tunia	Blank.
Eochaich Leith-treine			Blank	Blank.
Buain Osrainche			Blank	Blank.
			Blank	Blank.
Nia Corb	Dronadh		Blank	Blank.
Cairbre Caem	Degradh	Maladh	Blank	Bressally.
Connall		Aedh	Finchadh	Aldodha.
Ruman Duach	Carbrie, Kellach, Kentalach, Connall, Muredach, Baringhe	Coemghan	Scandland	Teolachadha.
Lughaidh	Rughaidh, Ubneadh	Eochadh	Aedh	Fergnac.
Ciarran, Bishop	Flann	Aduanus, Bishop,	Sinal, Bishop,	Eare, Bishop,
	Aengus Iaimiodhan, Bishop			the Sons of Eare.

"Ruman." In the above table Ruman is represented as "Son of Aengus Ossory." This cannot be the same personage as Ruman Duach, the grand-father of St. Ciarran, who could not be living for two hundred years later.

It will be observed at a first glance at the above table that the pedigrees of the two bishops, Sinal and Erc, are imperfect, each wanting four or five descents to connect them with their respective progenitors. Little can now be gleaned to illustrate the history or memory of those remote ecclesiastics. From their pedigrees we are able to ascertain that they all were the contemporaries of St. Ciaran, and as such must have been his scholars or disciples. In another respect those primitive men are deserving of notice here, as the names of many of them are still associated with either the sites of churches or some other such memorial, in the diocese of Ossory. The first of them is

ST. AENGUS LAIMIODHAN, *i.e.* Aengus of the pure hands, or the pure-handed. Like Ciaran, he was the tenth in descent from their common ancestor, Aengus Ossory. Colgan says the feast of this saint was formerly observed on the 16th February, and it is so set down in the Martyrologies of Tallagh and Donegal. In the former he is thus commemorated, "*Oengus, Eps, Ratha nae, Espuc,*" that is Aengus, Bishop of Rath-na-Espuc, or, as it is anglicised, Rathaspick. The church of this saint gives name to the parish of Rathaspick, in the Barony of Ballyadams, Queen's County, and very significantly there is a part of this parish found in the present county of Kilkenny, though isolated from its other part by the parish of Killaban, in the diocese of Leighlin. The part of Rathaspick in Ossory, consists of that part of the modern parish of Clough¹ lying east of the "Clough River," in the Barony of Fassadinan, in the north of the ancient Ui Duach or Odagh. As Bishop Aengus was an Ossory man, this was probably his native place. The two Rathaspicks appear to have been formerly united till the western end of Killaban was inserted between them. In the Protestant Church, till its disestablishment in 1871, Rathaspick in Ossory belonged to the rector of Rathaspick, in the diocese of Leighlin.

ST. ADUANUS, BISHOP.—He was also the tenth in descent from Aengus Ossory. His festival day is not given by Colgan, nor does his name appear, at least in the present form, in either the Martyrologies of Tallacht or Donegal. This name, Aduanus, differs only in its Latin

¹ "Clough." There was no parish named Clough among the ancient ecclesiastical districts of Ossory, and the Roman Catholic parish now known by that name is formed out of a portion of the parish of Castlecomer and that part of the parish of Rathaspick situated in the County of Kilkenny.

termination from Aedh, a common Irish name now anglicised Hugh; and we find in the Martyrology of Donegal, at the 6th February, a saint of that name thus commemorated:—"Aedh Glas, Bishop of Rath-na-n-Epscop," *i.e.* Aedh or Hugh of the Stream, Bishop of Rathaspick. The stream, from which this bishop was denominated Aedh Glas, now forms the western boundary of the parish of Killaban, and runs from Rathaspick, in the diocese of Leighlin, to Rathaspick in Ossory, in which latter place, it is now known as the "Clough River." It is an interesting coincidence to find the feast of this saint fixed on the same day as that of Bishop Aengus of the same church last noticed: whence it appears that these two holy men resided together, and that from their so dwelling, the church which they there founded received the name of Rathaspick, *i.e.* the Bishop's Rath. It is probable that they departed this life on the 16th February, as they were both honoured on that day, in the church which they had there founded. In the Life of Ciaran, the Bishop Aedh or Aduanus is named Aedus. He was present when the chief of the dal Fiachre conferred upon Ciaran the lands and emoluments of Saighir for ever.

ST. ERC, BISHOP.—Colgan says the feast of St. Erc was observed on the 27th October; and in the Martyrology of Donegal at that day his memory is thus commemorated:—"Erc, Bishop of Domhnach-mor-Maigh-Luadhat, in the north of Ui Faelain. This may be Earch, bishop, son of Fergna, son of Folachta, who is of the race of Bresal Brec, from whom the Osraighe are descended." This pedigree fully agrees with the genealogy of the same saint given by Colgan. In the same Martyrology, at the 17th September, we find another festival of a St. Earc thus entered—"Earc, Bishop of *Domknach-mor Maighe-Damhairne*," which might be thus anglicised:—Earke, Bishop of Donoughmore, in the plain of Da-Harney. Is not this Da-Harney the root of the name of an ancient church, which again gives its name to our present parish of Aharney, in the north of Ui Duach, and is it not from this Bishop Erc, or Earc, that the church and parish of Erke, in the north-west of the same district, were originally so named? In the same Calendar, at the 19th April, we find the feast of "the sons of Erc of Darmagh." And singular enough, like their father, we have a second festival of these same saints set down at the 12th November, in this concise entry, "The three sons of Erc, of Darmagh." Darmagh was an ancient church of note in the north of Ui-Duach, and is now

well known by the anglicised form of Durrow, twelve Irish miles north of Kilkenny. It is of importance to note here the relative positions of the several localities with which the names of Bishop Erc and his sons are associated, viz., Durrow, Aharney, and Erke—three primitive churches situated contiguous to each other in the territory of the ancient Ui Duach.

ST. SINAL, BISHOP.—Colgan appears to have known but little of either the pedigree or the individuality of this saint. He says his festival day was either the 12th January, or the 11th November. In the Martyrology of Donegal, at the latter day, we find the feast of “St. Cronan, son of Sinell;” but there is no other ground to conclude that this father of Cronan was Bishop Sinal. At the 12th January we have the festival of another Sinal thus entered:—“Sineall, son of Tighernach, of the race of Eoghan, son of Niall.” If this pedigree be correct the Sineall named in it cannot be the Sinal of the “family of the Ossorians,” as he was not of the race of Niall, but of that of Bresal Brec. The Sinal of the “house of St. Ciaran”¹ was evidently the same personage as St. Sillan, the patron and founder of the old church of Kill-Deilgie, about two miles south-west of Aghaboe, in the territory of Ui-Duach, and whose memory is thus commemorated in all the calendars on the 31st January. “Sillan of Cill-Deilge;” Killdeilge, means the *Church of Thorns*.

The site of the old church of Cill-Dielgie is described as follows by the Rev. J. O’Hanlon in his great work, “The Lives of the Irish

¹ “House of St. Ciaran.” The Sinal of the “House of St. Ciaran” has his pedigree preserved in the *Leabhar Brec*, which has been kindly transcribed for me by the Rev. J. F. Shearman, and is as follows:—

Bishop Sinal, son of
|
Aedu
|
Scandlan
|
Thunea
|
Ruman
|
Aengus Osraigh.

This pedigree is not perfect and wants at least four descents, but it sufficiently proves that the Sinal of Ossory was not the saint of the same name commemorated in the calendars at the 12th January. In Reeves’ *Life of St. Adamnan* the learned author writes, “Sillans was the Irish form of the name; it was borne by three Abbots of Ulster in the seventh century. In the *Antiphonary of Bangor* it is called Sinlanus. Muratoi, tom. xi., part III., p. 251.” *Life of St. Adamnan*, p. 77.

Saints," part 10, p. 595: "There are the foundations of an old church visible at Kildellig, a parish in the Barony of Clarmallagh, Queen's County. They lie about one mile distant from the Ballybrophy station. On the interior these ruins measure about thirty feet in length by eighteen in width. The walls, of which only a few fragments remain, are nearly levelled to the ground. They seem to have been nearly four feet in thickness. They are mostly grass-covered, and the graveyard had clearly defined oblong boundaries. The extent of surface covered by graves was very considerable, and interments are not yet wholly discontinued." The learned writer will not allow this church of "Cill-Deilgie" to claim St. Sillan, of Cill-Deilgie, as its patron or founder. According to his view that privilege belongs to the church of Kildalkey, in the County of Meath. Yet, notwithstanding the researches and erudition of our reverend friend, he is forced to admit that "among all the proper names in our annals, and connected with this place (*i.e.* Kildalkey), that of St. Sillan is missing." Yet, even with this defect in the title deeds of the church of Kildalkey, our learned author will not allow the church of Cill-Deilgie in Ossory to be the legal inheritor of the patronage of St. Sillan; and to sap the foundation of its right or title to any such inheritance, he writes. "The patron saint of Kildelgy Church, in the Deanery of Aghaboe, was St. Ernanus or Senanus, abbot, and whose festival is assigned to the 1st January, for which he quotes the "Spicilegium."¹ Whatever weight may be in this argument, it tells with double force against the illegal claims advanced on the part of the church of Kildalkey, in Meath, to the patronage of St. Sillan. Here is what our esteemed

¹ "Spicilegium Ossoriense," by the Most Rev. Dr. Moran, bishop of Ossory, p. 7. It frequently occurs that more than one saint is found in connection with the same church; as for instance St. Lamraidhe founded the church of Killamory, though St. Gobban is generally set down as the patron of the same church. It also frequently happens that the original founders or patrons of our very primitive churches have been entirely forgotten and new patrons substituted in their places. Thus the parish of Tullaroan is so named from St. Odhran, whose tulach or tumulus stands near the old church there. Yet this church is not dedicated to that saint, though its parish retains his name—the parish festival being that of the "Assumption," the 15th August. The church of Tullaroan is built in the "Early English" style of Gothic architecture peculiar to the thirteenth century, and was, no doubt, erected by Raymond le Gros, the ancestor of the Grace family in Ireland, who, about that period, founded his great fortress at Courtstown in the same locality: since then the name of St. Odhran is lost sight of, in the traditions and observances of that parish. It will also be frequently found that the festival day of the original founder or patron of a church occurs on the festival of some modern and better known saint as at Killamory, where the "patron" was held on the 6th December, the

author writes :—"The old church of Cill-Deilgie (*i.e.* Kildalkey) was dedicated to Damhnat, or Dymphna, whose festival was there celebrated on the 15th May. Near the church was a holy well called Tobar Damhnata. It was nearly dried up when Dr. O'Donovan examined this locality." The name of St. Ernanus, or Senanus, is not now either popularly, traditionally, or otherwise known in connection with the church of Cill-Deilgie, in Ossory ;¹ and if the circumstance of its being so found in the "Spicilegium" invalidates the title of that church to the patronage of St. Sillan, what right or title can Kildalkey have to the same estate, where the grass-covered stones of the church and the dried-up well in the cemetery are engraved with the name of St. Dymphna, as patroness of that primitive establishment ?

feast of St. Gobban ; but this same day being also the feast of St. Nicholas, and he, being more popularly known, was substituted for Gobban as patron of that church. The same observations apply to the parish church of Kilmoganny, about four miles south of Kells. Here the "patron" is always held on the Sunday next following the feast of St. Bartholomew, the 24th August. Whence it is popularly believed in the parish that he is its patron ; but we find in the "Spicilegium" that the place actually retains the name of the patron saint of the church, viz : St. Moganus, by prefixing Cill to which, we have Kilmogan or Kilmogany. The feast of this saint is set down for the 23rd August, the day preceding that of St. Bartholomew, but the latter being the better known has been recognised as the patron of the locality. Numerous cases of a similar nature might be adduced, in further illustration of this matter ; but sufficient has been advanced to prove that the circumstance of St. Ernanus being named in the Spicilegium as the patron of Kill Deilgie church does not prevent St. Sillan or Sinal from having been its founder.

"In Ossory." There are two churches in Ossory bearing the addenda of "Deilgie," namely, Kildeilgie, the parish church in the Deanery of Aghaboe noticed above, and Drumdeilgie, formerly a parish church, now included in the parish of St. Canice, Deanery of Siller, two Irish miles above Kilkenny. The church of Drumdeilgie, or Thornback, was a secular ecclesiastical establishment down to the time of the Reformation, as will be clearly demonstrated from the following extracts from the taxations of this diocese : "In the Red Book of Ossory," A.D. 1296. "Ecclesia de Dromdelgy" is valued at 53s. 4d., whilst in the deanery of Aghaboe the "Ecclesia de Delgy" is set down as of no value. Again, in the Procurations of 1351 "the Rectory of Dromdelegie in the deanery of Siller" paid 8s. 8d., and the Rectory of Delgy of Aghaboe only 18d. In the taxation of 1510 "Ecclesia de Drumdelgan" is valued at 10 marks. The above quotations have been kindly furnished me by the Rev. James Graves, to whom I applied for information respecting two references to those churches in Bishop Moran's "Spicilegium." Those references are in the "Taxatio Ossoriensis, A.D. 1587," p. 11. Here the "Rectoria de Kildellighly" is valued at £2, and in p. 12 of the same valuable authority, the "Rectoria de Delgye" is also valued at the same sum. "I would, therefore, conclude," says Mr. Graves, "that the Rectoria de Delgye" of the "Spicilegium," p. 12, is Kildellig, in the Queen's County, and as the other has always the *Drum* prefixed, unless the deanery is named, we must understand by it the old church of Drumdeilgie or Thornback. These quotations amply prove that the old church of Drumdeilgie or Thornback had been a parochial establishment, before its amalgamation with St. Canice's, and also that the amalgamation must have taken place since the period of the Reformation. Of the founder or patron of this church no legend or tradition exists. There is a very copious spring of water there called *Tober-na-green*.

Having thus disposed of the pretensions of the church of Kildalkey to the patronage of St. Sillan, it will be reasonably enquired what connection can I establish between him and the church of Cill-Deilgie in Ossory? In answer to which I say: First—he was an Ossorian, and his pedigree from *Aengus Osraighe* is preserved in the *Leabhar Brec*. Secondly—he is named as one of the fourteen saints of the “House of St. Ciaran.” Thirdly—the site of his church is within the territory of the ancient *Ui Duach*, into which those saints, with the whole of the Ossorian tribesmen, were driven by King Aengus, in his successful raid to restore the ancient treaty, known as the “Eric of Fearghus Scannal.”¹

ST. FINNCHEA, VIRGIN, DAUGHTER OF DAGAEUS.—This saint must have been in much celebrity in ancient Ireland. Her name is found in all the Martyrologies. Colgan does not give the whole of her pedigree, so that we cannot decide, with any degree of certainty, the period in which she lived or the relationship in which she stood to St. Ciaran. Colgan says her memory was honoured on the 9th November, and in the Martyrology of Donegal she is thus commemorated at that day: “Finnseach, Virgin of Cruachan Maighe-abhna.” This Saint was the founder and patroness of the old church of Killfinnch, in the south of Ossory, that was burned by the Danes of Waterford in the year 836. From enquiries made elsewhere² in detail, the church of Cill-Finnchi, in the south of Ossory, appears to have been identical with the old ruin near Knocktopher, well known as “Sheepstown church.”³ The western doorway is still perfect and exhibits architectural features of great antiquity. Within a short distance of this old church, and close to the village of Kilmoganny, there is a well-known townland and hamlet called Crohane, in Irish *Cruchan*, the native place of this holy virgin. The proposition that she lived as early as the time of St. Ciaran cannot be advanced. She belonged to the “family of the Ossorians” but not to the “House of St. Ciaran.”

¹ “Fergus Scannal”. See this matter discussed in chapter xi.

² “Elsewhere.” See Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland “Archæological Society,” 1861, p. 381.

³ “Sheepstown,” *i.e.* Bally-na-Caerach. In the year 1596 Thomas, Earl of Ormond and Ossory, surrendered to the Crown, amongst other ecclesiastical possessions, “the rectory of Balligeragh;” from which it would appear that the old church of Sheepstown had been a parochial establishment down to that period. See Morrin’s Rolls, Vol. II. p. 358.

There is a saint of this church thus commemorated in the Martyrology of Donegal, at the Second February : "Findeach Duirnd, bishop of Cill-Finnche, of Ath-Duirn in Osraighe. Duirn Buidhe is the name of a hill in Magh Reighna;" Knockdrina is now the name of that hill.

SS. CORBRIE, CELLACH, CENN-FALADH BISHOP, CONAILL, MURREDACH, RUDGUSSADH AND UBNEA BISHOP.—Seven brothers, the sons of Ruman Duach, of whom Colgan says, "The festivals of the seven sons of Ruman Duach I do not find observed, so as to enable me to distinguish between them and many saints of the same names. Aengus (author of the *Feliere*), however, makes mention of the sons of Ruman amongst many saints born of the same parents" ("Liber Opuscul C.") Those seven saints, the brothers of Ciaran's father, must be received as the founders of the ancient church of *Ui Duach*, *i.e.* the church of the sons or descendents of Duach. The ruins and cemetery of this ancient place are well known on the brow of the river Nore at "Three Castles"¹ bridge, four miles above Kilkenny.

This church was one of distinction in ancient times, being the head of the rural deanery of "Odogh." In old taxations, this church is denominated "Castleodogh;" the castle from which it is so named is still standing there. The place is now generally known as "Three Castles." Contiguous to the cemetery and inside of "Three Castles Demesne" stands a great pile or artificial heap of earth, which was most probably the *tulach*² or tumulus of Ruman Duach. He was, of course, a pagan, but his seven sons have been venerated as saints, and their church here exists as a memorial of their conversion to the Christian faith.³

¹ "Three Castles." This is but a very modern name for this locality; it must, however, be as old as the existence of those castles. One of those is still standing close to the ruins of the old church, a second of them was taken down to its basement story, about sixty years since, and the present glebe house erected on it: the bottom chambers of the house still show the groined arches of the old castle. The third of those buildings stood in the court yard of "Three Castles House;" it, too, has been taken down to its basement story; its groined arches, covered with basket work, is now used as one of the out-offices of the house.

² "Tulach." The chapel of Tulla is the modern representative of the ancient church of *Ui Duach*, and it must have been from the sepulchral pile there that this chapel was so named. There is no townland named Tulach in the district. The old chapel was the last thatched house of its kind in the county of Kilkenny. It was taken down about thirty years since. Its site is still shown by the side of the road. The new church is built in the townland of Leugh, yet it is popularly called the chapel of Tulla.

³ "Christian faith." The following is the Latin of the passage quoted from Colgan, above, p. 101. "Quatuordecim SS. Genealogiam refert Sanculogium Geneal, ex domo S. Kierani, sive Ossorien familia, descendunt. Benedictum fratrem his adjungit Calend. Cassel, ad 10 Junii: eorum autem genealogiam sic deducit citatum Sanctilogium, cap. 12:—

Whether the seven sons of Ruman resided together in this church, or dispersed themselves over the entire tribeland of Ui Duach, we cannot determine, but the latter appears the more probable. In the Martyrologies of Tallaght and Donegal, at the 24th September, occurs the feast of "*Ceallachan Clavin-tioprát*," the original form of which may have been Ceallach-an-Cluain-tioprát, *i.e.* Kellach of Clontubbrid, an ancient church and holy well near Freshford, in the territory of the ancient Ui-Duach. There are numerous saints named Connall, but none of them is named son of Ruman in any of the Martyrologies. It is probable, however, that Conaill, the son of Ruman Duach, was the founder and patron of the old church of Ros-Connell in the north of Ui-Duach, which still exists as a memorial of him. Muredach is pronounced Murreea or Murry, and I see no reason to doubt that he was the founder of the church of Kilmurry, near Thomastown. There are two saints named Muiredach in the Irish calendars, one at the 15th

"S. Ængussius Laim—iodhan, filius Flannii, filii Barindi, filii Finchadii filii Degadii, filii Dronii, filii Buanii, filii Eochadii, Leth-trein, filii Amalgadii, filii Leogarii, Birn-buadhach, filii Ængussii Ossoriensis, filii Crimtanni Magni, filii Erci, &c.

"S. Aduanius filius Eochadii, filii Aidi filii Coemghin, filii Malii, filii Dronii filii Buanii, &c., ut supra.

"S. Kieranus Sagirensis filius Luagnei, filii Rumandii Duach, filii Connalli, filii Corprei, filii Niercorbi, filii Buani, ut supra.

"SS. Corbreus, Kellachus, Kennfaladius, Episcopus Conallus, Muredacius, Rudgussius, et Ubneus Episcopus, septem filii Rumandi Duach, filii Connalli, &c.

"S. Ercus Episcopus, filius Fergnae, filii Teolchadii, filii Aldodii, filii Bressalii, filii Muredacii, filii Crimthani Magni, filii Erci, &c.

S. Sinellus Episcopus, filius Aidi, filii Scanlani, filii Finchæ, filii Rumani, filii Ængussii Osserensis, etc.

"S. Finchea v. filia Dagaiei, filii Dunlangii, filii Fethcellii, &c.

"S. Benedictum his addit Calend, Cassel, ad 10 Junii; S. Benedictus filius Luagnei, filii Leth-trinn, filii Birn de Dal Birn Ossoriae, Coorbanus sive successor Endei Aranensis, et frater Kierani Sagirensis; ipse est papa quem ferunt esse in insula Araniensi, ubi in genealogia hujus Benedicti omittit aliquos gradus recensitos supra in genealogia St. Kierani.

"Sed quoad natales predictorum, hoc ex Mart, Tamt, Calend, Cassel, Marino, et Mart. Dongal lensi observandum est; quod S. Ængussius colatur, 16 Feb.; Kieranus 5 Martii; Ercus 27th Oct.; Moelfaidius, 31 Januarii; Sinellus, 12 Januarii, vel 11 Nov., et Finchea, 9 Nov.

"Natales autem septem filiorum Rumandi Duach non reperio observatos, ita ut possim inter ipsos et plures sanctos eis cognomines discernere; ab Ængussio tamen lib, opuscul. c. inter plures sanctos eodem parente natos nominantur filii Rumandi.

Colg. V.S. Kierani, p. 472.

"Holy Well." More properly a Druids Well, as the Irish name implies, *Tubber-na-Druid*, a very curious and ancient stone-roofed house, in which the Druid or Saint appears to have lived. It stands in the grave-yard of the chapel of Clontubbrid, *i.e.* the Plain of the Well, an ancient parish church near Freshford.

May, another at the 12th August, but I have no material to connect either with any church in Ossory.

ST. MALLANFAIDH, ABBOT.—Colgan says the feast of this saint used to be kept on the 31st January, on which day it occurs in the Martyrologies of Tallaght and Donegal. In both he is described as Abbot of Dairinis at Lismore Mochuda. Though this saint was an Ossorian by family and birth, there is no ground to include him amongst those of the “House of St. Ciaran,” as he could not have been living for more than a century after Ciaran’s death. The pedigree of St. Mallanfaidh is preserved in the *Lebhar Breac*. He is the nineteenth in descent from Aengus Ossory, and was flourishing towards the end of the seventh century. I know of no memorial preserved of him in Ossory.

ST. BENEDICT, ABBOT.—“The Calendar of Cashel,” says Colgan, “at the 10th June joins to these (*i.e.* the saints above enumerated) St. Benedict, brother of St. Ciaran, of Saighir, who was Coarbh or successor of St. Endie of Arann.” This Benedict is clearly the same personage, commemorated in the Martyrologies of Tallaght and Donegal at the 14th June. In the latter, his feast is thus entered:—“Nem Mac Ua Birn, abbot, successor of Enda of Aran; he was the brother of Ciaran of Saighir, A.D. 654.” The reading of this passage is that Nem Mac was of the Ua Birn, or dal Birn, of Ossory, and the transcriber converted or Latinised Birn into Benedict. The Martyrology of Tallaght has nothing about his being brother of Ciaran of Saighir. The entry is simply this—“Naem Mac h. Birn,” the h. Birn being equivalent to Ui. Hy. or O’Birn—that is the dal Birn, whence it would appear that the only ground for making this personage a brother of Ciaran was the circumstance of his having belonged to the same class or family of the Osraigh; for Ciaran is also said to have been of the “dal Birn of Osraigh.” Nem Mac Ua Birn may have been, and probably was, a “brother” in the monastery of Saighir, and might, on that account, be denominated a brother of the founder of that house. He also may have been promoted to the coarbhship of the island of Aran. Had he been a uterine brother of St. Ciaran, he would have been too important a personage to have been ignored in all the authorities bearing on the existence and relatives of the saint. The words which Colgan quotes from the Calendar of Cashel—“He is the *papa*, who is said to be in the island of Aran,” being

written in the present tense excite suspicions that he did not live at an earlier date than that of the compilation of that calendar in the beginning of the tenth century. O'Cleary gives A.D. 654 as the date of his demise. St. Ciaran at that time had been nearly two hundred years gone to heaven.

Dr. Lanigan fastens upon this passage of Colgan's as an authority to refute what he calls "the foolish stories about Ciaran's" antiquity, vol. II., p. 69, *et seq.* But he should have remembered that in vol. I., pp. 397-400, he admits Enda of Arann to have been the brother-in-law¹ of King Aengus, and if so there could be nothing in point of time to prevent Ciaran's younger brother succeeding Enda, as they would in that case be all contemporaries. Lanigan assigns the death of Enda to the year 542. But if this be correct how could he be the brother-in-law¹ of King Aengus who was baptized by St. Patrick, in the year 450. The application of the word "papa" to this so-called brother of Ciaran's shows that he must have lived at a much later date than either Ciaran, Enda or Aengus.

We are now in a position to distinguish between the saints of the "House of St. Ciaran," and those of the "family of the Ossorians" giving the three saints Mallanfaidh, Finnchea, and Benedict to the Ossorian family. We have the saints of "Ciaran's house" as follows, viz. :—Ciaran, bishop ; Aengus Laimiodhan, bishop ; Aduanus, bishop ;

¹ "Brother-in-law." The matrimonial relationship between King Aengus and St. Enda is rather curious. The transaction is thus recorded in the Martyrology of Donegal at the 31st July, on which day, and amongst the other saints, "The sons of Nadhfrach," Colman is thus commemorated :

"Colman, Bishop, son of Dairine, *i.e.* the son of Aengus, son of Natfraech, son of Corc, son of Lughaidh, King of Munster. Sant was the name of his mother. The reason why he was called Colman, son of Dairine, is because she (Dairine) was *his mother Sant's sister*, and she was barren, for she bore no children, and she asked for Colman, when a child, from her sister, that he might be named from her, and Sant gave the boy to Dairine to be nursed ; and hence he is called Colman, son of Dairine."

"Those two ladies, Sant and Dairine, besides being sisters of each other, were also sisters of St. Enda of Arann, and of a third lady St. Faenchae, of whom see Father O'Hanlon's "Lives of the Irish Saints" at 1st January. The marriage of the king with the sisters of the two saints must have occurred before the baptism of King Aengus, 450, as we cannot believe that St. Patrick would permit his royal neophyte such an illicit privilege. King Aengus had a third wife, namely, Eithne Vathach, of whom see next chapter,

"If Enda died as late as the year 542 he could not have been the brother-in-law of King Aengus. But if he was the brother-in-law of that prince he should have been the contemporary of St. Ciaran, and therefore the brother of the latter might have succeeded him in the island of Arann."

Sinal, bishop ; Earck, bishop ; Kenfalaidh, bishop ; Ubneach, bishop. Also Corbrei, Kellach, Conaill, Murreadh, and Rughaidh the sons of Ruman Duach, with the "three sons of Earc," making, in all, including himself, fifteen students of the "House of St. Ciaran," seven of them being bishops, but all of them being venerated as saints in the ancient Irish church.

It will be noted here that the memorials (meagre though they be) which exist of the saints of the house of St. Ciaran are all situated within the tribeland of Ui Duach (Odach.) But if Ciaran opened his mission on the site of his church and "holy well" on the western bank of the river Nore, and within the precincts of the present city of Kilkenny, as has been contended for in the preceding chapter, why is it that nearly every vestige of that mission and every local reminiscence of the saints of his school are not to be found in the territory of "Raighne," as this part of Ossory was then called, but in "Ui Duach" (Odagh) then known as Magh Airget-Ros. The answer to that question will form the subject of our next chapter.

Ciaran is now near twenty years preaching in Ossory ; his intellectual superiority, as well as the clanish influence which he possessed with his tribe, elevated him at once into a position of moral ascendancy amongst them. He became the leader and pastor of his own people. His seven uncles, the sons of Ruman Duach, are now the chieftains of Ossory. Two of these are bishops, but all of them saints. Hence we can understand the social happiness and domestic peace which, with the Christian religion, Ciaran planted in his native tribeland, but the evil genius of a woman is now fomenting the fumes of discord. The horrors of war will now burst over his head ; he will be banished from the scene of his mission and from the centre of his affections, and saddened at the ways and doings of a world which he cannot control, he will retire to the woods and fastnesses of Eilie, there to live in pious seclusion from men—far removed from the turbulence of Pagan strife.

CHAPTER XI.

BIRTH AND CHARACTER OF EITHNE VATHACH - HER MARRIAGE WITH
 AENGUS, KING OF MUNSTER—THE BATTLE OF FEIMHIN—ITS STILL
 EXISTING MEMORIALS—THE ERIC OF FEARGHUS SCANNAL—THE
 CAUSE OF CIARAN'S RETREAT FROM OSSORY.

When St. Ciaran returned from the Continent about the year 425 the kingdom of Ossory consisted of the province of Magh Feamhin, which was co-extensive with the present baronies of Iffa and Offa East, Middle Third, &c., in Tipperary; and of Magh Reighna and Magh Airget Ros; the latter comprised the upper valley of the Nore from Slieve Bloom to Drumdeilgie, and the former that part of the present county of Kilkenny reaching from Drumdeilgy or Thornback to the ridge of hills which runs east and west across the southern district of the county of Kilkenny, known as Drumderg, at the "Nine Mile House," and "Windgap." But as this territory is now to be modified in its boundaries and reduced in its extent to the limits of the present diocese of Ossory, and as the events from which resulted these alterations are but meagrely recorded, it will be necessary, in order to comprehend their bearing, that we go back to the reign of Cormac Ulfada, near two hundred years before the time of St. Ciaran's mission, at which we have now arrived.

In the middle of the third century the followers of Fiach Suidhe, brother to Conn of the Hundred Battles, were expelled from their estates in Meath. They travelled southwards and were patronised by Oliol Olum, then king of Munster, from whom they obtained lands in the now county of Waterford. This event occurred between the years 253 and 277, from which period to the middle of the fifth century, their possessions were confined to the district since known as "Desii Tuisguirt," or South Desii, and were co-extensive with the present diocese of Waterford, and that part of the diocese of Lismore, south of the river Suir. In the early part of the fifth century the people of the Desii were afflicted with famine, and so severely harassed by their neighbours, the Ossorians, from the northern side of the river Suir, that they contemplated retiring from that district, and searching for possessions in other parts of the island. They applied to the Druids for guidance in those difficulties, and by them were counselled to hold

possession of their present estates, that years of prosperity were at hand, and that a certain lady was then far advanced in pregnancy, whose offspring would be the medium through which affluence and power would be restored to their tribe. They were further advised to procure the possession of the child soon after its birth, and to have it suitably nurtured and educated, which instructions being complied with, this child of destiny grew up to be no other than the celebrated lady Eithne Vathach; and as the predictions of the Druids were not to be accomplished in favour of the Desii until the period of the marriage of this lady, young and beautiful children were prepared and served up as nutritious condiments to accelerate her womanhood, which, being attained, she was given away by her guardians as wife to Aengus Mac Nadhfrach, King of Munster.

Eithne Vathach was daughter to Crimthan, the regulus of Ui Ceinnsealach, who was converted by St. Patrick when he visited that territory in the year 448; her mother's name was Mell, daughter to Erebran Regulas, of the Desii, in which circumstance originated the romantic historical connection of this lady with the people of that country, which I have not seen referred to elsewhere than in Keating's History, nor am I aware that the account which he gives of her youthful training is elsewhere supported, or rests on any other authority. But all that is recorded of her represents her as an immoral, licentious virago. Her espousals with King Aengus form the materials of an historical tale preserved in the Book of Leinster, and entitled "The Courtship¹ of Eithne, the hateful daughter of Crimthan." Elsewhere in these tales she is denominated "Eithne Vathach, the detestable," and in the "Chronicum Sanctorum" her death-fall in the battle of Kill-Osnagh, is chronicled as that of "Eithne Vathach, the hateful daughter of Crimthan." Whether the lady, in her early life, may have otherwise given public disedification is not recorded; but, from whatever cause it arose, St. Ciaran does not appear ever to have entertained towards her other feelings than those with which a nature of high moral and religious susceptibilities would regard a woman whose ruling passions were those of masculine ambition and sensual excesses. That Ciaran was ruling in Ossory during the education of this lady in the country of the Desii is certain. That he lived on terms of familiarity with King Aengus and his father King

1 The Courtship." See O'Curry's Lectures—Appendix, p. 586.

Nadhfrach is directly to be inferred from their family relationship, local proximity, and the clanish institutions of the time. That Aengus espoused Eithne Vathach without the knowledge of his cousin and neighbour, St. Ciaran of Ossory, is altogether improbable, and nothing is more probable than that he, a Christian bishop, would lift his voice against the union of such a woman with one of his own relatives. Early in life he predicted for this woman an evil end. Subsequently, when like Magdalen, she prostrated herself at his feet asking for pardon, he told her that her sins were forgiven her, but that he could not avert the death which he had predicted should befall her; and can we, therefore, be surprised if, on the occasion of her marriage with his own cousin, King Aengus, he exerted his influence to prejudice her in his affections. If he did so he did not succeed. The youthful charms of the future virago captivated the eyes of the king. Her voice gained his ear; her counsels, not Ciaran's, ruled in Cashel; and as the mother of Herodias required the head of the Baptist to satiate her rage for the reprehension of her sinful career, so the spouse of King Aengus could no longer endure the presence of either Ciaran or his people. Henceforward the Desii, not the Ossorians, are the favourites of her lord, and one of the conditions of her marriage with him was, that before the accomplishment of their union he should expel the people of Ossory out of the plains of Magh Feimhin, and hand over the southern part of that territory to the Desii as an *eric* for the solicitude with which they had nurtured her in her infancy, and handed her over to him in the maturity of her youth; and thus we are told was fulfilled the prediction of the Sages, namely, that power and affluence should come to the Desii through the instrumentality of this offspring of fate.

Granting the romantic parts of this story to be deeply tinged with fiction, no doubt can exist that the expulsion of the Ossorians from Magh Feimhin was effected at this particular period. According to O'Flaherty, the Ossorians were expelled out of Feimhin by King Aengus because "they ruled that country in a hostile manner;"¹ but he does not tell us why the larger portion of that territory was handed over to the people of Desii after the Ossorians had thus been expelled. In the "*Chronicum Scotorum*" the expulsion of the Ossorians is barely entered as the "Battle of Feimhin." The chronology,

¹ "Hostile Manner." Ogygia. Healy's translation, Vol. II., p. 243.

however, is important, as it fixes the date of the event. The entry is as follows :—

“Kal. III. [A.D. 445]. Battle of Feamhim, in which fell the son of Cairthind, son of Colboth, son of Niall; some say he was of the Picts.”

We are not informed on which side this chieftain fell, and the obscurity of the passage is provokingly embarrassing. The battle, however, must have been an important engagement, since the compiler of those annals deemed it deserving of a place in his concise and meagre records. It was fought in the year 445, which fully agrees in point of time with the cause assigned for it by Keating, namely, the marriage of Eithne Vathach with Aengus whilst he was still a pagan, and during the public mission of St. Ciaran in Ossory. At the date of this battle Ciaran had been nearly twenty years returned from the continent. His mission amongst his own people was one of Christian civilization; and the very lessons of peace, self-denial, &c., which he constantly inculcated necessarily unfitted them to cope in turbulence and bloodshed with the pagan tribesmen by whom they were surrounded; hence, though the Ossorians appear to have fought with desperate bravery in defence of their possessions, they were completely subdued and defeated by the Mummonian forces. From Keating's graphic sketch of the engagement, we can form an idea of the strife and carnage which characterised the retreat of the Ossorian army.

“Understand¹ that it was Aengus of Ossory, with his followers, obtained power in Magh Feimhin, which was called Northern Deise, and that it was this race of Fiach Suighdhe expelled [the descendants of] Aengus of Ossory with his clans from Magh Feimhin, so that from the defeat they inflicted on [the race of] Aengus, Baile Orlaidhe, and Mullach Indheona in Magh Feimhin are so called to this day. Baile Orlaidhe indeed! That is from the mangling of the heroes in the conflict; and Mullach Indheona because of their forcibly expelling the Ossorians thence into Leinster.”

The memory of this battle is preserved in the topographical nomenclature of the district over which the Ossorian army retreated. Mullach Indheona is now the well-known town of Mullinahone, about

¹ “Understand.” This passage is given from the translation which, accompanied by the Irish text, appeared in the “Irish Ecclesiastical,” October 1866. The same passage will be found in any one of the numerous editions of Keating, under the reign of Cormac Mac Art; but wanting the beautiful sentiment of this translation.

four Irish miles south-west of Callan; and Orlaidhe, Arleudhe or Urliudhe, anglicised Arley, Urley, and Earley, became the name of the tract of country lying along the banks of the King's river, from the union of that stream with the Munster river, near Scottsborough, on the borders of Ossory and Munster. This word Orlaidhe or Urliudhe, in O'Reilly's Irish Dictionary, is translated a skirmish or conflict; which etymology agrees with the history of its origin given by Keating, and it appears highly probable that from the valley of the King's river having been the scene of this conflict that stream was originally called the *Callan* or the *Callanach* river, which would be equivalent to the river of clamour, of noise, or of shouting. Bealach Urluindhe, or the road of the conflict, was a pass along the valley of this river from Ossory into Munster. After the English invasion an Anglo-Norman adventurer, named St. Aubin, settled here and became a powerful proprietor, and from him Bealach Urluidhe was anglicised into Ballagh Tobin, now the name of a parish and church on the south side of the King's river between Callan and Kells. The beautiful and almost evergreen townland known as Harleypark was down to the end of the last century denominated Ros-na-Harley, *i.e.* the Ross or grove of Ardlaidhe or Arley—the *grove of the conflict*. The townland between Harleypark and the confluence of the two streams called the Munster and King's rivers is now called Scottsborough, from a family of the Scotts, who resided there during the last century, but previous to their occupation the place was called *Urling*, from Urluidhe or Arlaidhe. When John Scott was raised to the peerage in A.D. 1774 he took the title of *Viscount Earlsfort*, *i.e.* the fort of Urluidhe or Earley; and *Baile Orlaidhe*, after the English invasion, was anglicised Newtown-de-Earley. Subsequently it was denominated Earleytown. It is now Earlstown, the name of the church and parish on the north bank of the King's river between Killenny and Callan, about seven miles below Kilkenny. This then is the history of the battle of Feimhin, fought in the year 445, and which has so indelibly left its impress on the face of the country to the present day.

Thus far we have been illustrating the history of the "Battle of Feimhin," as it is recorded in Keating. The romantic training of the lady Eithne Vathach by her relatives, the people of Desii, and her subsequent marriage with King Aengus of Munster, our author assigns as the immediate cause of that engagement. But whatever these

may have had to do in accelerating the event its real cause and object existed in the determination of King Aengus to enforce the observance of the treaty known as the "Eric of Fearghus Scannal," which guaranteed to Munster the possession of that part of the ancient Ossory extending southwards from the ridge of hills which we have already described as running westwards from the river Nore, three miles above Kilkenny, to the river Suir, three miles south-west of Cashel. This was the treaty violated by Aengus Ossory, in the first century, when he conquered the "territory between the rivers," and established the Suir as the common boundary of Munster and Ossory. It was this same compact that was again sought to be enforced by the Munster men in the reign of Feilimídh Rechtmar, when they drove the Ossorians before them to the north of Ossory, where they were themselves completely overthrown by the combined armies of Ossory and Leinster, under the generalship of Lughaidh Laoighis. It was this same treaty that Corc, King of Munster, made an effort to restore about the year 380, when he removed the seat of his government from Knockgraffan, on the west side of the river Suir, to the "fairy hill" of *Sídh-druim*, in the plain of Magh Feimhin, thenceforward the royal city of Cashel; and now the grandson of Corc Aengus Mac Nádhrach, insists on the restoration, in its entirety, of the terms of this ancient stipulation.

At the period of the "battle of Feimhin" the seven sons of Ruman Duach, under the guidance of St. Ciaran, governed the territory of Ossory. The battle would apparently commence by the army of the Desii crossing the river Suir and attacking the Ossorians near the present town of Clonmel. There is there, still, in the parish of Newchapel, the townland of Mullach Inaheone, and Keating tells us that word originated in the "expulsion" with which the Ossorians were driven out from Munster. They were pursued northwards from the river Suir by the Desii through the passes in the Drumderg ridge of hills. One detachment retreated through *Bearna-na-gaoith* (Windgap), from which they would be led by the level of the country down to the King's River, near Killenny. Here an engagement took place, and the locality has since retained the name of *Bally Urluidhe*, i.e. the town of the conflict or slaughter. Other detachments were driven through the pass near the "Nine Mile House," anciently called *Bearna-na-Coil Leith*, i.e. the "gap of the gray wood." These were

pursued along the flat to the west of Kilbride church below Callan. Here another battle was fought, and the place is since called *Boher-a-Voraga*, i.e. Boher-na-Boragha, the road of the valiant men. Following the same line of country to about a mile west of Callan, we come to *Farran-Arlaidhe*, now Arleyland, near the King's River. Here another battle ensued. The name means the land of the conflict or slaughter.

Simultaneous with the retreat of the Ossorians before the Desii from the plain of Feimhim, the clans who peopled *Machaire Caisail*, i.e. the plains of Cashel, were also retreating before the advances of Aengus Mac Nadhrach and his Munster forces. They were driven through the country afterwards called Compsey. A battle was fought at the town of Mullinahone,¹ from which the defeated army retreated through *Bealach Arlaidhe*, a pass under the southern declivity of the Sliabh Ardagh hills, towards the confluence of the two streams now called the Munster and King's Rivers. Here an important engagement must have occurred. The whole district was formerly called Urluidhe, or Arlaidhe. Here was *Fort-Arlaidhe* anglicised Earlsfort.² *Ross-na-*

¹ "Mullinahone." It is an interesting and significant fact to find a locality called by the name of Innehone, or *Indheone*, in each of the two territories from which the Desii and the Munster men respectively expelled the Ossorians. Mullach Innehone, in the parish of New Chapel, near the town of Clonmel, is denominated in the Annals of the Four Masters (A.D. 852), *Indecoin—na-nDeisi*, i.e. Indheoine of the Desii, from its having been situated in that country, and in contra distinction to "Innehone the hospitable," which Shane More O'Dugan places on the borders of Munster, and uses it as a land-mark from which to Leithghlinn or Old Leighlin, to determine the width of the territory of Ossory. He writes—

"From Mullach Innehone the hospitable,
Is Ossory's part of the land Gailian [Leinster],
 Eastwards to Leith Ghlinn."

In plainer terms this passage reads:—From Mullach Innehone on the west, to Leithghlinn or Old Leighlin on the east, is the part of Leinster that belongs to Ossory. Hence it will at once appear that the present town of Mullinahone as necessarily represents the ancient Mullach Inneona, as the town of "Old Leighlin" does to that of Leithghlinn. For further illustration of this subject see "Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-east of Ireland Archæological Society," 1864, Vol. v., new series, No. 46, p. 193. "Shane More O'Dugan, chief bard and historiographer of Hy Many, died after the victory of Extreme Unction and Penance at Rinn-Duin, among the monks of St. John the Baptist." Four Masters, 1372. See O'Dugan's Topographical Poem on the "Extent of Ancient Ossory, published with translation and notes by Dr. O'Donovan in supplement form to the "Transactions of the Kilkenny Archæological Society," Vol. i., Part ii., p. 14.

² "Earlsfort." In the year 1784 the Rev. J. P. Mulcalle, P.P., Ballyragget, consulted the Right Hon. Lord Earlsfort and his brother Mr. Scott, respecting a legacy left by a Mr. Bray to Mr. Robert Butler, for Miss Mulally's poor school in Ballyragget. See copy of this transaction in the Library of St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny, MS. collection, page 1, &c.

Arlaidhe, or Harley Park, *Farran Arlaidhe*, now Aarley Land. *Bally Arlaidhe*, called Newtown de Arlaidhe or Earley, now Earlstown. Keating says¹ that the word Arlaidhe or Urluidhe, in its application to this place, comes from "the blows or irresistible strokes of valiant men;" and here we have preserved, in this very neighbourhood, the townland and hamlet of *Boher a Voragha*,² i.e. "*the road of valiant men*," which, no doubt, was the ancient highway by which the Munmonian heroes returned from the conflict.

Keating says "*Indheona*³ is so called because of the Munster men forcibly expelling the Ossorians thence into Leinster." Into Leinster does not here mean that they were driven over the Barrow into the present counties of Carlow or Wexford, but that they were expelled and pursued from the valley of the King's River, in which those conflicts had occurred, over the present Barony of Shillelogher, and through the gap in the Drumdeilgy hills, still called *Bearna Glassaghna*, i.e. the gap of the Green Bushes, into Magh "Airget Ros," then admitted by Munster to belong to Leinster; and here the conflict would appear to have ceased, for the Ossorians having been expelled from Magh Feimhim and Magh Reighna—which Munster at that time claimed as part of its own territory—into Magh Airget Ros, the "Eric of Fearghus Scannal" was restored, the conflict ended, and Aengus Mac Nadhfrach now confers on the people of the Desii—without whose aid he could not have gained this victory—the

¹ "Keating says." See Carson's old folio edition, Book 1st, p. 130; also Duffy's edition, Book 1st, p. 286.

² "*Boher a Voraga*," i.e. Boher-na-Boraga, from *Boher* road, *na* of, and *Boraga* valiant. A very primitive hamlet midway between Mullinahone and Callan. For the translation of *Boraga*, see O'Reilly's Irish Dictionary, p. 72, where the orthography and translation are thus rendered—"Borraghach, adj., Warlike, Valiant; from *borr* and *ag*."

³ "*Indheona* is so called." Id. It is held by the intelligent people of Mullinahone that the word means the Mill of St. John; but there is not a shadow of evidence in support of this derivation. *Indheona*, as Keating writes it, is not the Irish for the proper name "John." Keating was a Tipperary priest; he must have known the town of Mullinahone, and he says the word means "a violent expulsion." Besides this, no memorial-monumental or historical—exists to show that Mullinahone had ever been the site of an ecclesiastical establishment of any order—secular or regular. It was not even the head of a parish, for the present Roman Catholic parish of that name is formed out of a union of many ancient parishes, such as Kilvemnon, Modeshil, Killahy, &c. There is an ancient building still standing in the town. It is a colossal pile of masonry, locally called the "Old Stone." This, it is said, was the Mill of St. John; but it never could have been a water mill, and there is not about it a single ecclesiastical feature. It resembles a Norman castle on a large scale. In the Book of Rights it is stated that the King of Munster kept a fort or royal mansion at "*Indheone*;" and this singular old structure appears to be the remains of the fortress of one of the latest kings of that province.

lands of Magh Feimhin, from which they themselves had expelled the Ossorians, and at the same time he seized on and annexed to Munster the lands of the ancient Osraigh, extending from Drumdeilgy, three miles above Kilkenny, down to the ridge of hills then called Drumderg, and which we have already described as forming the common boundary between Magh Feimhin and Magh Reighna.

In this expulsion of the Ossorians, was involved the ruin of St. Ciaran's missionary establishment in Ossory, and the dispersion of his community there. Those primitive ecclesiastics retreated with their tribesmen, and the few memorials preserved of the "saints of the house of St. Ciaran," represent them as having been promiscuously scattered over the newly-founded colony of Ui Duach. The seven sons of Ruman Duach we esteem as the founders and patrons of the ancient church of Ui Duach. The two bishops Aengus Laimiodhan and Aduanus settled down in the north-east of that territory, and from their dwelling there the church which they founded has been since known as Rathaspick or the Bishopsrath. Bishop Earc opened his mission in Damhairne, now Aharney, and gave his name also to the adjoining parish of Erke in the northern extreme of Ui Duach. The sons of Earc, who are venerated as saints, were the first evangelisers of Dearmagh, now Durrow, in the same country. Conaill, one of the seven sons of Ruman Duach, built his church amidst primeval woods on the bank of the stream now called the *Avonbeg*, and from him the church and parish there have been since named Ros-Connell. Bishop Sinal was the founder of the old church of Kildeilgy, *i.e.* *The Church of Thorns*, near Aghaboe, and St. Cellach, the brother of Conaill, preached the gospel at Clontubbrid, an ancient church between Ballyragget and Freshford. As for St. Ciaran himself he appears to have been overpowered by the storm of bloodshed; he saw his school dispersed and his community scattered amongst the heathen, and he himself, like a shepherd without a flock, retires before the hurricane into the forests of Eilie, "where he intended to lead the life of a hermit, for the locality was full of woods." We shall now allow the storm to subside in Ossory; we shall leave the scholars of Ciaran in sorrow, not knowing the place of their master's retreat; we shall follow this venerable man in his solitude, and sit with him on the brink of the boiling fountain, whilst his own Biographer shall narrate to us the original foundation of the church and monastery of Saighir.

CHAPTER XII.

ORIGINAL INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF SAIGHIR—FIRST CON-
VERTS OF ST. CIARAN THERE—THEIR STILL EXISTING MEMO-
RIALS—ORIGIN OF THE FLOCKS AND HERDS OF SAIGHIR.

“This well, about which we have just spoken, is situated in a solitary district on the borders of Munster, eastwards and westwards of Leinster, yet it is in Munster that Eilie lies, and it is there that Ciaran intended first residing as a hermit, because the locality was surrounded by large woods at the time, and he contemplated erecting a small cell there, but afterwards a monastery, and finally, by God’s grace, a cathedral, which is universally called Saighir Ciaran.

“When Ciaran arrived here he sat beneath the shade of a huge tree to shelter himself from the heat of the sun, and a ferocious wild boar bounded from the other side of it, which, on seeing Ciaran, ran off, but returned again to Ciaran a meek and humble servant, being, by God’s grace, brought to docility; and this wild boar was the first disciple, and the first monk that Ciaran had.

“This boar went about regularly to the woods, and brought small timber, which he pulled with his tusks, to assist in building the cell. There was no one with Ciaran at the time, for it was unknown to his disciples that he had come to this hermitage. Therefore, there came ferocious wild beasts from the desert to Ciaran, viz., the fox, the badger, the wolf, the doe, and they were all subservient to Ciaran, and received his teachings as humble and contrite monks should do, and they obeyed him in everything.

“One day that the wild fox, who was lustful, cunning, wicked, and evilly-disposed by nature, met the saint’s sandals and stole them, and immediately left the community and went towards his old den, where he began to eat the sandals. But on this being made known to Ciaran he sent another of his monks—the badger—to bring back the fox; but on arriving at the fox’s den he found him in the very act of eating the sandals, for he had the latchets and fongs already gnawed off. The badger beseeched him to return to the monastery, and both came in the afternoon to Ciaran with the sandals.

“Brother,” said Ciaran, addressing the fox,¹ “Why didst thou commit

¹ “Addressing the Fox.” In the very beautiful “Inaugural Address” delivered by the Right Rev. Dr. Moran, bishop of Ossory, at the first meeting of the Ossory Archæological Society, 7th January, 1874, I observe, at p. 4, the following reference to the subject now under discussion: “We owe,” says his lordship, “to an antiquarian among our citizens the suggestion that these were

this shameful theft, which is not becoming a Christian monk to do, for we have water here in abundance, and food also, and if your natural propensities overcame you, God would make flesh meat for you of the very bark of the trees which surround us."

"The fox then implored Ciaran to forgive him his sins, and begged to have penance imposed upon him, which was accordingly done, and the fox never tasted food till he got leave from Ciaran to do so, and he then became pious like the rest of the animals ever after.

"After this his own disciples, with a great many others, came to Ciaran and he contemplated erecting a magnificent monastery, and the aforesaid animals remained in their natural shape ever after with Ciaran, and became his domestic servants, and he took great delight in them."

The entire drift of this anecdote is clearly a design on the part of the writer to show, with the help of the usual bardic exaggerations, the materials out of which Ciaran founded his community of monks at Saighir after his school had been dispersed in Ossory. The most rapacious, unfaithful, cunning,* cruel, morose and ungrateful animals are here made to represent his first converts at Saighir—evidently implying that they included outlaws, knaves, slovens, and untractable characters; that one of them assimilated to the fox, relapsing into his old habits, actually stole his master's shoes and quitted the monastery; and the saint, solicitous only for his conversion, sent another convert, in whom he appears to have reposed more confidence, and likened to the badger, to seek out and induce him to return to his master. The address of Ciaran to the returned culprit is an affectionate and dignified expostulation with a penitent offender, and well calculated to sustain that authority which is said to have been a peculiarity in his character. It is added that after Ciaran's own disciples, who had been dispersed by the war-storm in Ossory, had discovered the place of his retreat they, with many others, again flocked around him, and the other or later converts became his domestic servants, from which we are to understand that after the regular community had been established in the monastery these disciples or con-

merely the names borne by some of the religious brethren of our saint's monastery; and this suggestion is confirmed by the fact that similar names were at the same period familiar in the monasteries of Gaul and Italy. In the letters of St. Paulinus of Nola, and other contemporary records, we meet, at every page, with bishops and monks called Ursus, Aper, Lupus, and so-forth—such names being chosen for humility sake by some of the brightest ornaments of the continental monasteries."

verts continued to occupy the position of lay-brothers, filling all the menial offices of the house, and their master was much pleased with their obedience and simplicity.

Wildly fabulous as this narrative appears in its naked originality, yet the explanation now given of it is fully sustained by the still existing memorials of those primitive monks in the County of Kilkenny. We noted above that when the Fox had relapsed into his dishonest habits, St. Ciaran commissioned the Badger to effect his conversion; whence, it would seem, that the saint reposed much confidence in the zeal and fidelity of this convert, who subsequently appears to have attained so high a degree of excellence in the estimation of his master that he entrusted to him the care of a missionary station, where he afterwards died and was buried, and where, to the present day, the name of that church perpetuates his memory. Five Irish miles south of the City of Kilkenny, in the Barony of Shillelogher, stand, in the centre of the graveyard of Grove, the ruins of the ancient parish church of Tullagh-na-brogue, *i.e.* *Tulach-na-broc*, the tumulus¹ or sepulchral mound of the Badger. It cannot be doubted that this Badger was St. Ciaran's disciple, otherwise a Christian church would not assume, as its title, the name of such an animal. Still lower in the county, in the Barony of Knocktopher, and contiguous to the old church and cemetery of Derrynahinch, is the church of Kiltorcan,²

¹ "Tumulus." The tulach or artificial mound from which this church and parish derived the name of Tullaghanbrogue, stood in the angle of the field which is formed by the junction of the narrow lane leading to the grave-yard with the high road leading to Desart. The tulach is now nearly levelled to the surface of the field; the circular outlines of its basement are still visible. One of the natives of the place told me that the mound was, within his memory, much higher, and that it was reduced to its present level by the neighbouring farmers carting away the materials for agricultural purposes.

² "Church of Kiltorcan." Derrynahinch would appear to have been but an *alias* for Kiltorcan. In the "Spicilegium Ossoriense," in the old order of the episcopal visitation of the diocese of Ossory this church—in the deanery of Kells—is described as "Ecclesia de Kiltorcan et Derrinehensi." In the "Nomina Patronorum Ecclesiarum," &c, p. 9, this church is simply denominated "Derrinehensi," but in the "Taxatio Ossoriensis," A.D. 1537, the "Vicaria de Kiltorcan" is valued at £3. There is no mention of Derrynahinch here. But in a Patent Roll (1596) Thomas, Earl of Ormonde and Ossory surrendered to the crown, amongst other ecclesiastical possessions, the "Rectories of Derinhinchie, Kiltorkane," &c. See Morrin's Rolls, Vol. II., p. 358. From this it would appear that they were distinct churches or rectories. In Tighe's Survey, Kiltorcan and Derrynahinch or Derinhinch are made distinct parishes. Yet I think the weight of evidence is the other way. Kiltorcan and Derrynahinch are two townlands adjoining each other at the Ballyhale Railway station. The old church of Derrynahinch is, I think, within the townland of Kiltorcan, and from what has been advanced above it would appear that this church was formerly indiscriminately known as that of Kiltorcan or Derrynahinch.

i.e. the Church of the Boar. This was the rapacious animal that bounded from behind the huge tree under which Ciaran had taken shelter from the heat of the sun. This convert may have been appointed to the government of this church towards the close of his life, or this church may have been erected here as a memorial of his conversion by some companion of his labours in the mission. Though not mentioned in the legend, Ciaran appears to have had another convert in his community, who, from his simplicity, or, perhaps, his stupidity, or some such natural peculiarity, was named the sheep. In the north-west of the County of Kilkenny, the site of a very primitive ecclesiastical establishment is marked by one of our ancient round towers, well known as the "*Steeple of Fearta.*" In most of our authorities this church is denominated *Fearta na yCeareach*, *i.e.* the grave of the sheep. St. Ciaran himself is received as the founder and patron of this church, and there is nothing more probable than that he would place over it one of his favourite disciples called the sheep, who there having paid the common debt of nature was laid to repose beneath its soil, and from whom this church was subsequently denominated *Ferta na gCeareach*, or the grave of the sheep—a natural testimonial to the simple piety of this humble monk of Saighir.

The origin of the flocks and herds of the monastery is next recorded:—

"On another occasion the servant which Ciaran had at the woods came to him and said, "We want meat." Ciaran replied, "As the Lord has given us everything else he will also give us pigs," and there came on the following day a very large sow along with twelve others to the labourers employed there.

"On another occasion the same servant informed Ciaran that there was no sheep, and Ciaran said, "He that gave us swine will also give us sheep," [and as the servant went outside of the village he found twenty-eight white sheep grazing on the plain, and he brought them home, and many sheep were bred of them."

The object of these anecdotes appears to be to show the legal right of the community of Saighir to the chattel property of the establishment. It was no man's gift, but was sent by Providence for the special use of St. Ciaran and his monks.

"There was a very powerful man, whose name was Finntuoin, residing in that district [Saighir], and he brought his son, who was dead, to Ciaran, in order to see if he would bring him to life. Laoghaire was the

son's name; and as Ciaran prayed to the Lord for his recovery he arose from the dead and lived for a long time after. And that man presented Ciaran at his death the land called Rathfinntuoin at this day."¹

This then is our author's account of the original foundation and endowment of the monastic institution of Saighir, as well as the title of the establishment to the landed and chattel property then in its possession. The flocks and herds of the house were no man's gift, as God sent sheep and swine, which soon amplified for the use of the monastery, and no man could lay claim to the lands of Rathfinntuoin, as the chieftain of that district, had given them to St. Ciaran as a thank-offering for the restoration of his son to life.

¹ "Rathfinntuoin at this day." There is no place near Saighir now known by this name; but there is an ancient Church called "Rath," which gives name to a parish within about three miles of Saighir. Is this church the representative of that erected by the "powerful man," as a memorial of his son's miraculous restoration to life, and which, with the lands it was built on, he presented to Ciaran at his death?

CHAPTER XIII.

FOUNDATION OF THE NUNNERY OF KILLYON—CONVERSION OF THE CHIEF
OF THE DAL FIACHRA—ENDOWMENT OF THE CHURCH OF SAIGHIR.

Immediately after the establishment of the monastery of Saighir St. Ciaran founded a nunnery for religious females. The origin of this institution is thus recorded in the legend :—

“A young lady came most opportunely to Ciaran and he converted her, and built her a neat little cell close to the monastery, and he invited other holy virgins to visit her, and amongst them the ever-bashful virgin Bruinneach, the daughter of a noble lord of Munster; and Ciaran’s mother had been very much attached to her, being a foster-child of her’s,” &c., &c.

This religious house is lower down in the legend denominated Cill Liadain, anglicised Killyon, or Killeen, *i.e.* St. Lean’s church, and many writers have asserted that it was built by St. Ciaran for his mother, who was to govern there a female community. But the passage just quoted shows that he had intended it for a very different person. That this nunnery was not erected by St. Ciaran to be governed by his mother will appear evident on the following grounds: St. Ciaran was fifty years of age when he returned from Rome in the year 425, and at the year 445, the date of the battle of Feimhin, which banished him out of Ossory, he had attained his seventieth year, and as his mother must have been at least twenty years in advance she would be ninety years old at the period of the foundation of the nunnery of Killyon, when, if in the world at all, she would be but ill-qualified to govern a congregation of ladies. The fact of dedicating this church to her memory, implies that she had departed this life before its erection. The church of Killyon stood in the Barony of Fircal, between Birr and Saighir,¹ in the King’s County. St. Ciaran’s mother, Liedania or Lean, was honoured there on the 11th of August, and the remains of a church bearing her name was standing there till the year 1846. Who the “young lady” was for whom St. Ciaran built this church we are not told; but the holy virgins whom he invited to visit her must have been those that had been scat-

¹ “Birr and Saighir.” For a notice of Killyon, and some curious discoveries made there, see Transactions of Kilkenny Archæological Society, vol. i., p. 215.

tered from their convent in Ossory by the same war-storm that had dispersed his scholars and sent himself a fugitive from the same country.

The community of ladies having attracted the attention of a neighbouring chieftain, who having heard of the youthful accomplishments of Bruinneach, the favourite foster-child of Ciaran's mother, came with a great force, carried her away, and retained her in his castle. St. Ciaran came to this chieftain of the dal Fiachra, named Dima, and after much difficulty succeeded in effecting the release of this lady, and her restoration to the nunnery. But Dima, subsequently regretting his silliness in restoring the lady to Ciaran, came a second time with a great body of Kearnes to effect, by force, a second abduction. But on his approach Bruinneach swooned away and died, upon which Dima, thus disappointed, accused St. Ciaran of having caused her death, and threatened to expel him from the place. But Ciaran, who was a man of great decision and force of character, was not to be thus easily deterred from his purpose. He told Dima that "though God for a season might permit him to do evil, yet he would not depart, but would remain in spite of him."

The following anecdote is our author's account of this singular transaction, and is truly characteristic of the age in which he wrote:—

"A young lady came most opportunely to Ciaran, and he converted her, and built her a neat little cell close to the monastery, and he invited other holy virgins to visit her, and amongst them the ever-bashful virgin Bruinneach, the daughter of a noble lord of Munster, and Ciaran's mother had been very much attached to her, being a foster-child of her's, and was most amiable and accomplished in her manners. But as the chieftain of the dal Fiachra heard of her extraordinary beauty, he came with a large body of Kearnes and took her away by force of arms. His name was Dima, and he kept her in his castle for a considerable time. . . . And Ciaran came to Dima and asked him to allow the lady to return home. But Dima would not allow her to leave him, and said 'she should not go unless the screeching of the Heron awoke him in his bed the next morning. It was then winter, and the ground was thickly covered with snow, except the spot on which Ciaran and his disciples resided.'"

"The following morning, although contrary to the bird's nature, a Heron was perched on the top of every house in the *Dun*, and when Dima heard it he became greatly alarmed, and came in all haste to where Ciaran was and knelt down before him, and suffered the lady to return home.

. And Ciaran brought her to her cell, which is called *Cill Liadhain* [Kill Lyon or Kill Lean]. Still Dima was very much attached to her, and became sorry for parting with her so silly, and he came a second time to take her off by force; but God did not permit him, as it was the wish of Ciaran, his holy mother, and the lady herself; for at the moment that Dima reached the village Bruineach swooned away and died, and Dima was sorry for that, and addressing Ciaran said to him, ‘Why hast thou killed my wedded wife, and now you shall not dwell here.’”

“Ciaran then said to Dima that it was not in his power to do that of himself, but that God may permit him for a season to do evil, and therefore he would not depart, but would remain in spite of him.”

“Dima departed in great rage, and threatened to exterminate Ciaran, but the vengeance of heaven overtook himself for his evil doings, for on reaching his castle he found it on a blaze of fire, with all the out-offices; and he had a son of whom he was very fond, and in the confusion caused by the fire was forgotten asleep in Dima’s bed; but his mother seeing that there was no chance of saving him, cried out in a loud voice and said, ‘My loving child, I bequeath thee to Ciaran of Saighir, and I leave you entirely in his hands;’ and when the house fell in and the fire quenched, the infant was found unhurt and asleep; and as Dima saw this he went to where Ciaran and the Bishop Edus were, and he received absolution from Ciaran; and Dima presented him his two sons, viz., Donough, the infant whom Ciaran saved from the fire, and another son, and their posterity for ever after them; as also the monastery, rents, and emoluments arising from interments. And Dima returned to his own house in great joy, and he received many blessings from Ciaran.”

“Ciaran, not wishing that his foster-sister should so soon depart this world, and knowing that Dima would not annoy her any further, proceeded to where her body had been interred and there prayed to the Lord for her recovery; and she immediately arose from death to life and lived for a long time after.”

That an immoral chieftain would forcibly carry away a Christian lady is an incident not peculiar to Ireland or to Pagan times; and that God would visibly interfere for the protection of innocence and the promotion of faith at the intercession of his servant, is recorded to have occurred on many occasions previous and subsequent to the date of the events now under discussion. But whether we believe in the miraculous preservation of the infant just narrated, or in the equally miraculous con-

version of the chieftain, there appears to be no doubt that this anecdote is here specially recorded to show the ground upon which the ecclesiastics of Saighir established their title deeds to the lands of the monastery, the rents of its tenants, and the fees arising from interments in its cemetery, which most probably had been questioned or disputed by some neighbouring chieftain of the dal Fiachra at the time in which the writer of this Life of St. Ciaran was living.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. PATRICK'S JOURNEY THROUGH OSSORY—MEETS ST. CIARAN THERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN IRELAND—TRADITIONS AND MEMORIALS STILL EXISTING OF THEIR INTERVIEW—ST. CIARAN NOT PRESENT AT THE COUNCIL OF CASHEL.

“The Christian faith then began to spread rapidly, and on St. Patrick's arrival there were three holy bishops [besides Ciaran] in Ireland, viz., Ailbhe, of Emly Iubhair, and Ibar, bishop, and Declan, in his own land and country, the Decii of Munster; and the holy Ciaran converted many people of his own district or territory, and of the Ossorians in general, to the Christian faith.

“After this came the glorious archbishop, St. Patrick, from Pope Celestine to Ireland, and all Ireland was full of the faith, and received Christian baptism at his hands.”

The Irish apostle arrived in Ireland towards the close of the year 432, seven years subsequent to the return of St. Ciaran from Italy. In the year 448 Patrick visited Munster. During the early part of that year he had travelled through Leinster, preaching, converting, and baptizing the inhabitants. The route which he took from Leinster to Munster is thus indicated in one of his Lives published by Colgan:—

“Tunc venit Patricius per *Bealach Gabhran*, ad reges Mummiensium; et occurrit ei in Campo Femen Cengus filius Nathfrach, Rex Mummiensium et ille gavissus est in adventu Patricii et adduxit eum secum ad habitaculum suum qui dicitur Caissel.” “*Trias Thaum*, p. 26, c. 60.”

Bealach Gabhran here named is the well-known opening under the *Sliabh Margie* or *Gabhan* hills, which run in a continued ridge from near Athy to Gowran, in the County of Kilkenny, and this *bealach* or pass gave name to the district of central Ossory lying between the present town of Gowran and the borders of Tipperary, through which lay in ancient, as in modern times, the great highway from south Leinster to south and southwest Munster. From the extract just quoted it would appear that St. Patrick passed directly westwards across Ossory from Leinster into Munster. But we know that the apostle did not pass so rapidly through Ossory, but that he descended to the south and made a visitation of nearly the entire territory. It is significant that the biographers of Patrick and Ciaran are totally silent respecting any interview between the two

saints in Ossory. It may have been that the biographers of the Irish apostle having had nothing to report of his mission there, it being then a Christian land, pass over it without delay to the more active scenes of his mission, whilst the writer of the Life of Ciaran in his efforts to confine the patronage of the saint to his own church of Saighir, studiously omits from his biography every incident that could directly connect Ciaran with the church of Ossory. We shall now see from the Tripartite Life, from the Traditions of the County of Kilkenny, and from the Life of St. Declan, first, that St. Patrick, in his visit to Ossory, found it a Christian land; secondly, that he met and conversed with St. Ciaran there; and thirdly, that he must have descended from Bealach Gabhran, in central Ossory, to the south of the present County of Kilkenny, in order to meet St. Declan before he approached the royal city of Cashel.

The Irish apostle having entered Ossory from Leinster through Bealach Gabhran, found himself in the immediate vicinity of the King of Ossory's mansion place. The date of this visit of St. Patrick to Ossory in A.D. 448, was but three years subsequent to the great battle of Feimhin in A.D. 445, in which the Ossorians were completely subdued; but if there had been a King in Ossory on the arrival of St. Patrick in that territory, we would have some record of the reception offered by him to the Irish apostle; but there being no king at the time, may account for the silence with which the apostle's biographers have ignored his mission to Ossory. The following from the Vit. Trip. III., 27, is our only report of St. Patrick's visitation of Ossory, and it is almost certain that if he had been received by the regulus of the territory it would not be omitted:—

“Totam postea terram et gentem Ossoriorum benedixit, prædicens quod ex ea tam in Christi, quam in seculi militia, multi clari prodituri essent duces; et quod exterorum jugo vel potentia non essent opprimendi, quamdiu in suo, suorumque successorum obsequiis essent permansuri.”

This passage is a record of three distinct favours conferred by St. Patrick on the people of Ossory. First—he blessed the whole land and people of Ossory. Secondly—he predicted that from this tribe should come forth great men, both in the church and in the secular life. Now this blessing, and this prediction of St. Patrick, directly imply that he was then dealing with Christians and members of the same church to which he belonged himself, else why did he not first convert and baptize them, ere he had predicted their future excellence

in grace and virtue? But the third of the apostle's favours to the Ossorians, proves them not only to have been Christians at the time, but, in a singular manner, establishes the truth of a highly interesting tradition still vividly preserved in the diocese of Ossory. It has been stated above that St. Patrick did not proceed directly westwards through Bealach Gabhran to Cashel, but travelled thence southwards to the lower part of the present county of Kilkenny; and here, on the banks of the river Suir, according to tradition, he met St. Ciaran for the first time in Ireland. And in this same place to which tradition has thus conducted us, we have the two primitive townlands of Rathpatrick and Rathkieran as memorials of the mansion places of the two saints during their stay in that neighbourhood. We are also told by the tradition that on this occasion St. Ciaran and his people received the Irish apostle with such an unwelcome coolness that he reproached them as "*Durnauns*" or churls, and to the present day we have there the ancient baile or village of "*Dournane*."¹ As a testimonial in favour of the truth of the tradition, we may smile at all this as fireside lore; but listen to the terms upon which St. Patrick promises the accomplishment of his third benediction. He predicts "that the country should never be subjected to the yoke of strangers so long as the tribes of Ossory continued in obedience to him and to his successors." Does not this condition prove that the apostle had known that there then existed scattered congregations of Christians through Ireland, and this condition of his with the Ossorians is to be understood of his efforts to unite all those churches in obedience to one common national metropolitan.

The tradition just now illustrated by historical corroboration cannot be accepted as literally true in all its details. That the Irish apostle was received in Ossory with some degree of coldness may be safely asserted; but that he actually met St. Ciaran there, and received from him an indifferent reception, there is no authority to affirm. We can easily understand how a primitive people, governed in ideas, habits, and institutions by clanish laws, would accord to St. Patrick an unwelcome reception, if to them his mission appeared to supersede that of their own domestic bishop, who first carried to them the blessings of the faith, who was their own local chieftain, and

¹ "*Dournane*." This word is very incorrectly rendered into English at present. For its true etymology, see below, part III., chapter IV.

who had been then labouring in their conversion for near twenty years. But whatever may have been the jealousy with which the tribesmen of Ossory regarded the mission of St. Patrick, we know that the venerable Bishop Ciaran participated in no such sentiments. It was then near thirty years since Ciaran had conferred the order of priesthood on the youthful Patrick, when a student in the school of Lerins, when he importuned him to come to Ireland and accept the apostleship of its conversion; and we can easily conceive that on this, the first meeting of those two venerable patriarchs in Ireland, their mutual charity and zeal for religion suggested other sentiments than those of rivalry towards each other; and that no such feelings had been cherished in the breast of Ciaran is satisfactorily proved from the Life of St. Declan, in which we are informed that the four bishops who were in Ireland before St. Patrick, and who had received their commission from Rome, as he also had,

“Were not of the same mind as St. Patrick, but differed with him. But Kieran,¹ indeed, yielded all subjection, and concord, and supremacy to Patrick, both when he was present and absent.”

Whence we may conclude that St. Ciaran soon corrected the mistaken affection of his people, and instructed them to receive the Irish apostle as the *Ard Epscop* or high bishop of Ireland, in consequence of which St. Patrick pronounced his benediction on the land and people of Ossory, predicting that the tribe would produce great men in the church and in the state, and that so long as they remained in subjection to him and his successors, their country should not be subjected to the yoke of strangers.

St. Patrick having now concluded his visitation of Ossory, parted with St. Ciaran in the south of the present County of Kilkenny, and apparently at Rathkieran, on the bank of the River Suir; whence, following the course of that river, he came to the place then called Hynneone,² now Mullach-Innehone, a townland in the parish of New

¹ “Ciaran.” “Omnem subjectionem et concordiam, ac majestarium dedit.” Vita S. Declani, c. v., n. 39-40.

² “Hynneone.” The angel of the Lord came to Declan and said to him—“Go, now, quickly to St. Patrick; for he is this night in a place which is called Hynneone, in the midst of the plain of Femhin. Then Declan, with all haste, in accordance with the bidding of the angel, went forth that very night to the aforesaid place, Hynneone, through Mount Gaw, *i.e.* Sliabh Gaw, across the Suir, and in the morning reached St. Patrick.” Hynneone, here named, is now called Mullachinneone, a townland in the parish of New Chapel, near Clonmel.

Chapel, near the town of Clonmel. Here the apostle was visited, or waited upon, by St. Declan, who, having crossed the mountains of "Sliabh-Cua, from Ardmore, forded the river Suir, and tendered to St. Patrick his submission, after which the apostle faced towards the north through the plain of Magh Feimhin. When the intelligence of his approach having preceded him to the city of the king, Aengus, with his court, came forth to meet him, and introduced him in state to his "palace called Cashel."

The conversion and baptism of King Aengus followed the visit of the Irish apostle to Cashel, and to some period, not long subsequent, is assigned the "Synod of Cashel," which we shall here briefly notice.

"The four precursors¹ of St. Patrick, named Ailbhe, Declan, Kieran and Ibar, having come to Cashel to see the saint (*i.e.* Patrick) and to congratulate the king on his conversion, assisted at the synod which the apostle had convoked. These saints were confirmed at that synod in the possession of the churches they had founded. That of Imleach, otherwise Emly, founded by St. Ailbhe, was made the metropolis of the whole province. That of Ardmore, in the territory of Deisie, was adjudged to St. Declan. St. Ciaran was confirmed in the see of Saighir. Lastly—Ibar was appointed bishop of Beg-Erin, on the coast of Wexford."

The account of this Synod is received as authentic by both Ussher and Ware, which considerably irritates Dr. Lanigan, who holds the story to be no better than pure fiction. Dr. Todd maintains that the only foundation for the anecdote of this Synod is the following passage from the Life of St. Declan:—

"St. Patrick, St. Ailbhe, and St. Declan, with many of their holy disciples, during their sojourn in the city of Cashel, with King Aengus, made many regulations for ecclesiastical rule and Christian vigour, and for the further propagation of the Christian faith. Then St. Patrick and King Aengus, with all his people, ordained that the archbishopric of Munster²

¹ "Four Precursors." See Ware's Bishop's Life of St. Patrick.

² "Archbishopric of Munster." From this and other passages in the Life of Declan, it would appear to have been compiled for the purpose of exposing the groundless assumption of Cormac MacCuilleanan to the ecclesiastical presidency of Munster. Cormac thus sets forth his claim to supremacy in the Book of Rights." The Coarbh [*i.e.* the King Bishop] of Caiseal is a general head over all, inasmuch as he is the coarbh of Patrick;" and again "Victor, the angel of Patrick, prophesied that the grandeur and supremacy of Erie [Ireland] should be perpetually in that place," *i.e.* in Cashel. Cormac was the first bishop of Cashel, and those pretensions, now for the first time advanced, encroached on the

should be in the city and see of St. Ailbhe. They appointed also to St. Declan the territories which he had converted from paganism, namely the Desii."

There is not in this passage, nor in what follows, one word to justify the statement that St. Ciaran was confirmed by this Synod in the See of Saighir. At the period when this Synod should be held (if it ever was held), could be no more than from six to seven years, since King Aengus had expelled the people of St. Ciaran from their estates, and barbarously spoiled and devastated Ossory, dispersed the school of the saint, and sent himself a fugitive to the wilds and fastnesses of Eilie. Since then no reconciliation is recorded to have been effected between the saint and the king; and it is highly improbable that St. Ciaran would repair to Cashel to congratulate his cousin on his conversion till he had first made submission and acknowledgment for his injustice and cruelty towards the saint's people. Hence, whether the account of this Synod be authentic or otherwise, it is significant that it does not represent St. Ciaran as being a party to the ecclesiastical laws there enacted. The legend of Ciaran's life is totally silent on the point, and the next chapter in our narrative will show that the first visit of St. Ciaran to Cashel, after the baptism of the king, was not to congratulate him on his conversion, but to humble him to the dust for his irreverence and pride.

recognised privileges of the more ancient churches of Emly and Ardmore; and the writer of the Life of Declan, who was beyond doubt an ecclesiastic of the latter, thus appeals to history to refute the pretensions of Cormac." Then St. Patrick, with all his people, ordained that the archbishopric of Munster should be in the city and see of St. Ailbhe, who was then by them ordained archbishop for ever. They appointed also to St. Declan the territory which he had converted from paganism to the faith, namely, the Desii. It was decreed that Ailbh should be the second Patrick and patron of Munster, and Declan the second Patrick and patron of the Desii, and that the Desii should be his diocese to the end of the *world*," vit. S. Declan, c. vi. From this passage it would seem that the ecclesiastics of the territory of Desii, which was coextensive with the present dioceses of Waterford and Lismore, declined to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cashel, and that the Life of Declan was specially compiled as a set off against the Book of Rights, and if this conclusion be admitted it would follow that the former should be as old as the early part of the tenth century. See Book of Rights, pp. 31, 51, 55, and seq.

CHAPTER XV.

ST. CIARAN AND KING AENGUS—THE KING THREATENS TO TAKE THE LIFE OF THE SAINT—IS STRUCK BLIND AND AGAIN RESTORED TO SIGHT—IS CONVERTED AND RECONCILED TO ST. CIARAN.

“When St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, came to the territory of the men of Munster, and Aengus, the son of Nadhfrach, king of Munster, believed of God and in St. Patrick, and was baptized in his royal city of Cashel, there came a man, the son of Erc,¹ of the descendants of Duach, of the territory of Ossory, and maliciously killed St. Patrick’s horse; but he was taken prisoner by the soldiers of King Aengus, and they bound him in chains preparatory to his being put to death. But his relative implored Ciaran on his behalf, and he went to the king and gave him immense presents of gold and silver for his ransom, so that he was released and allowed to depart to his own country again. But after his departure the treasure which he had given the king melted away. Then the king being very angry, and sending for Ciaran, again he asked him why he gave him such worthless commodity for the release of the prisoner. Ciaran replied, and said, “all the wealth of this world came from dust and into dust would again return.” On hearing this the king became furious, and threatened to take Ciaran’s life. But the vengeance of God fell upon himself, as he lost the use of his eyes and fell to the earth in the presence of Ciaran, who was standing by at the time. But Cartach, the disciple of Ciaran and relative of the king, implored Ciaran to restore his sight, and through the prayers of Ciaran, and of those who were with him, the king recovered his sight, opened his eyes, and arose sound and whole; and many persons that supposed the king to be dead, and that Ciaran restored him to life, glorified God.”

From the context of this beautiful anecdote much more apparently lies concealed behind the narrative than is visible on its surface. At the date of these occurrences no reconciliation had been effected between St. Ciaran and King Aengus. Since the “battle of Feimhin,” when King Aengus had seized on the estates and cruelly ill-treated St. Ciaran’s people, this was their first meeting, but in the *interim*,

¹ “Son of Erc.” This personage is said to be of the “race of Duach;” hence he cannot have been the son of Bishop Erc, whose pedigree, given at p. 163 above, shows that he was not of the “race of Duach,” but descended through a collateral branch of the Ossorian family. He was, however, from the territory of Ui Duach (Odagh), was converted by St. Patrick, and was probably one of the “three sons of Erc,” who evangelised Dearmagh, or Durrow.

their relative positions had materially altered. Aengus was then a pagan prince ; he is now a Christian king, and Ciaran, invested with the authority of a Christian bishop, and attended by a numerous *retinue* of ecclesiastics, boldly enters the royal mansion to save the life of one of his own people. The Ossorian who killed the horse was of the "race of Duach,"¹ *i.e.* of the nobility of Ossory, and a near relative of St. Ciaran. The money presented to the King for the release of the prisoner was apparently the *eric* required by the Brenon law for the loss of the horse. The cupidity of the king would seem to have offended the disinterested piety of the saint, who, on this, the first opportunity since the event, reproached him for his avaricious propensities, which impelled him in the unjust and wicked acquisition of the property of the Ossorians, and illustrating his address by the beautiful moral so appropriate to the occasion, namely, that all the wealth he could acquire came from dust, and like himself would again return to the same worthless commodity, which so irritated the self-love and personal pride of this haughty prince, who, surrounded by servile flatterers, was never before addressed but in language of slavish adulation, "that, in his rage, he threatened to take the life of the saint." That God visibly punished the impiety of Aengus I have no reason to doubt. If it be granted that the Almighty has ordained the use of miracles as an agent for the conversion of the heathen, I know of no ground on which the exercise of that ordination can be denied to St. Ciaran ; nor is there any event recorded in the life of

¹ "Race of Duach." The traditions of the territory of Ui Duach singularly perpetuates the recollection of the ill-will which would appear to have existed between the Irish apostle and the inhabitants of that part of Ossory. If we believe the fireside lore of Odagh, St. Patrick went into that country to found a church, but the chief of the place insulted him, and forcibly drove him away, which so irritated the saint that he was forced to give expression to his resentment thus : "*Mallaigham, Malluigham Ui Duach, i.e.* I curse, I curse Odagh. But one of Patrick's disciples, who was related to the chieftain, succeeded in averting the curse from the people and having it fall on the thatch of the corn ricks, on the tops of the rushes, and on the river Dinan ; and to the present day, in consequence of this curse, the thatch of the stacks and ricks of corn are fiercely assailed by the wind, the tops of the rushes in this district have been proverbial for their premature decay, and the river Dinan is well known suddenly to swell into such foam and violence as to overtake and surprise persons endeavouring to ford its shallows, and to sweep away and destroy not only men, cattle, and corn, but also the churchyards which are situated within reach of its floods. Could it be as a retaliation for these maledictions on his tribeland that the man from Odagh travelled over to Cashel, and there maliciously killed St. Patrick's horse ? See "Traditions of the County of Kilkenny," by Dr. O'Donovan, Kilkenny Archæological Society, vol. I., part III., p. 362, et seq.

that saint that would more reasonably call for the interposition of God, than the impious rudeness of this insolent prince, who, in the plenitude of his arrogance, would dare to lift his hand against the "first-born of the saints of Ireland." Nor to our ideas of things could a more opportune time arise for the manifestation of Divine testimony in favour of Ciaran's mission, than the restoration of the king to health on this occasion, by God's power, and through the agency of his servant, St. Ciaran.

This story of the attack on St. Patrick's horse, is recorded in one of his own Lives, not very different from that given above, and though it does not contain any reference to St. Ciaran, it will materially aid us in illustrating the part of his history now under consideration.

"In these times four men from the northern stole the horses of St. Patrick and his companions, whom, when the theft was discovered, the holy man not only mercifully pardoned but admitted the delinquents into his family and attendants. One of them, Coen—Chomrachus by name, was a man of education and literary abilities. The second was a carpenter, the third a steward, and the fourth, Aedus by name, undertook the care of the horses with the man of God, and when the holy bishop was blessing his hands for the employment, he foretold that for the future he should be called Lamh Aedus, from the word Lamh meaning hand. The posterity of this man is called Lamhraighe."

These two accounts are apparently but different versions of the same transaction, from which it would follow that more than one delinquent was concerned in the depredation. They are said to have come from the North, as Ui Duach, the country of the son of Erc, might be properly described as being north of Cashel. It would appear that the theft had been perpetrated and discovered in the absence of St. Patrick; that all were taken prisoners and put in chains before being executed; that the interference of St. Ciaran and the payment of the eric procured the liberation of the son of Erc from Ui Duach, and that the Irish apostle having arrived in time to save the lives of the other prisoners, he not only pardoned them, but admitted them into his family; and from this timely interference of St. Patrick would seem to have resulted the full and final reconciliation between King Aengus and St. Ciaran. It is probable that St. Patrick now learned, for the first time, from the remonstrances of Ciaran, the unjust deeds of King Aengus and the cruelty and immorality of his wife, and we can well understand how the holy man would remonstrate with his

royal neophyte, explain to him the Divine precepts, and require him not only to humble himself before St. Ciaran, and ask his pardon for the injuries he had inflicted on his people, but also to make restitution to the utmost of his ability for his unjust acquisition of the estates of the Ossorians. The outline or details of these occurrences are not recorded; but the following appears to have resulted from this interview of the two saints with King Aengus, viz.—Magh Feamhin was to remain annexed to Munster, and Magh Reighna was to be restored to the Ossorians, and which, when united to Ui Duach, then in their possession, constituted the ancient kingdom of Ossory as it does the diocese of that name at the present day. King Aengus appears also to have guaranteed, as we shall see immediately, the independence of the kingdom of Ossory, only requiring that its king should be tributary to the king of Munster. St. Ciaran accepted these conditions, and from this forward we find the king manifesting the greatest reverence for the person of St. Ciaran, and the latter reciprocating by acts of kindness towards the king and blessings on his people.

The four thieves implicated in the horse-lifting¹ appear to have mended their ways after being admitted amongst St. Patrick's family. Coen Chomrachus² is probably the patron saint of the parish church of Kill Coen,³ in the barony of Idagh, and Lamhruadh, who undertook the care of St. Patrick's horses, has given name to the ancient parish church of Killamory, four miles south of Callan. The feast of Lamhruadh occurs in the Martyrologies of Tallaght and Donegal at the 9th May. He appears to have been also known by his original name Aedh or Hugh after his conversion. There is still existing in the cemetery of the old church of Cill Lamhruadhe, *i.e.* Killamory, an

¹ "Horse-lifting." It is probable that Aedh, or Lamhruadh, had been a native of this place, from him called Cill Lamruadh. There are there still in that parish, Carrig-na-Capple, the rock of the horse, and Poul-a-Capple, the pool or pond of the horse. Could these places, so named, have anything to do with the profession of Aedh, or Lamhruadh, as a horse-lifter before his conversion.

² "Chomrachus." This word, by aspirating the "ch," will be pronounced Commeris, or Comraus, the name of a well-known locality in the parish of Offerlane, now worthily presided over by the patriot priest, Father Tom. O'Shea, P.P. These men are said to be of the northern, or to have come from the north. Comeris is situated on the slopes of the Slieve Bloom hills, and might be properly described as north of Cashel.

³ "Kill Coan," *i.e.*, St. Coen's Church. There is no saint named Coen in either the Martyrologies of Tallaght or Donegal. Hence, it is most probable that Coen above in the text—"A man of education and literary abilities"—is the patron saint of this ancient church.

old, shapeless, weather-worn stone, inscribed in rude Irish characters with the words "OR AEDHEEN," *a prayer for Little Aedh.*" In this petition this humble convert asks a prayer from future generations for himself, under the humiliating form of Aedheen, or little Hugh.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MARTYRDOM OF THE HARPERS - THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH OF
TULLAGHHOUGHT—THE MARTYRDOM OF THE KING'S RETAINERS.

"The king had some good harpers at the time, whose strains were most enchanting and melodious, particularly when playing natural airs. And they were, on a certain day, travelling through the district called Musgraidhe Tire, in the province of Munster, and were murdered by an enemy who lay in ambush for them, and who concealed the bodies of their murdered victims in a lake which lay near the plain wherein they were murdered, and hung their harps on a tree, which grew on the edge of the lake. This grieved Aengus, and made him frantic, because he did not know who the murderers were. But remembering Ciaran to be a holy man, he came to enquire of him who had killed the harpers, as he did not wish to enquire of his own druid on account of his having become a Christian. Ciaran said to him, "your harpers were treacherously murdered, and their bodies are hid in a lake close to the place where the murder was committed, and their harps are hung upon a tree on the brow of the lake." And the king implored Ciaran to accompany him there that he might be able to get the bodies; and they both proceeded to the lake, and Ciaran prayed and fasted, that the bodies might be found, and as soon as his fast was over the waters of the lake dried up so much that the bodies were visible; and they were taken up and brought into the presence of Ciaran, who again prayed to the Lord, and they were restored to life in the presence of the king, and they looked as if they were only asleep.

"They were eight in number, and were for a full month in the water, and they took their harps from the tree and played melodious and soul-stirring airs before the king and Ciaran, and all those assembled on the occasion, and the melody was so touching that many fell asleep, and praise and glorification were offered to God and Ciaran, and the lake is dried up ever since; but in commemoration of this miracle, it is called *Loch-na-Geantraidhe*, or the Harpers' Lake to this day. And after blessing the king and the harpers, Ciaran returned to his own home."

At the last interview between King Aengus and St. Ciaran the king, in his rage, threatened to take the life of the saint, But he now remembers him to be a holy man; he recognises his priesthood, and repairs to him for advice in his perplexity. "For," says our author, "he did not wish to enquire of his own druid on account of his having become a Christian." These words are suggestive respecting the cause of the death of the harpers. Human nature was the same in

Ireland as elsewhere, and it is wholly incredible that the powerful pagan priesthood of that period, in this country, would witness the downfall of their order, and the overthrow of their time-honoured institutions, without one effort on their part to preserve, from destruction, the charter of the immemorial privileges of their sacred office ; and the anecdote which we are now illustrating, as well as the one immediately to follow, clearly show that paganism in Ireland assumed as hostile an attitude towards Christianity as the circumstances of the time would permit. The text says the harpers “were murdered by an enemy who lay in ambush for them.” Who could the enemy be who lay in *ambush* for those humble men, except the fanatical infidels, instigated by the pagan priests, now raging with envy at the conversion of the king, and at being themselves superseded in his court, and their office now being filled by a Christian priest ; and not daring to manifest their wrath in the face of the sovereign, they avenged their malice on his unprotected retainers. These harpers were simple, unassuming men, but they were Christians, and it is highly probable that they had been engaged on their instruments in harping hymns of praise in honour of the true God when they were surprised in the grove and cruelly slain by the infidels, and consequently their death must have been regarded both by the saint and the king as that of Christian martyrs ; and hence the anxiety of the king that Ciaran should accompany him to the lake, and the alacrity with which the saint consented, in order to recover the bodies of the martyred men.

“St. Ciaran said to the king, “Your harpers were cruelly murdered, and their bodies are hid in a lake close to where the murder was committed, and their harps are hung upon a tree on the brow of the lake.” From which, it would appear, that the discovery was natural, not miraculous. The king, with his retinue, and the saint, with his attendant ministers, having proceeded to the lake, where they must have been accompanied by a large concourse of people, as well as by the relatives of the deceased musicians, and on arriving there St. Ciaran had the bodies of the eight martyrs removed from the bed of the lake and laid to repose in the presence of the king, and although they had been a month in the water, they were still composed, and “looked as if they were only asleep.” St. Ciaran prayed for some time by the side of the martyrs, and being aroused by the lamentations of their disconsolate relatives, he appears to have availed himself of this

most opportune occasion to expatiate on the immortality of the soul, and on the promises of the Redeemer, that those "who lose their lives for His sake shall find it;" that "He is the resurrection and the life, and that he who believeth in Him, although he be dead, shall live." Or he probably described the joys of the martyrs in the life of the world to come, in the words of St. John: "And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder, and the voice which I heard was the voice of harpers harping on their harps." And so enraptured were the multitude by the eloquence of the saint, and so consoled by the assurances of the Divine promises, that it might be said that St. Ciaran had restored the harpers to life, and that they took down their harps from the tree and played most melodious and soul-stirring airs. The legend adds, "And they were eight in number, and they had been for a full month in the water." This entry is valuable, as it helps to associate the memory of those martyrs with an ecclesiastical establishment of the present day. In the south-west of the present County of Kilkenny, and on the borders of Munster, stands the ancient church of Tullaghought, *i.e.* *Cill-Tullach-Oct*—the church of the tulach or sepulchre of the Eight. From this it would appear that when St. Ciaran and his assistants had performed the solemn obsequies of those primitive martyrs, that he founded the church close to their tomb, to exist as a memorial of their having laid down their lives for God, and so imposing were all those performances in the sight of King Aengus and his people, "that praise and glorification were offered to God and to Ciaran," and the saint, giving his final benediction to the king and his people, returned to his own home.

ST. CIARAN RESTORES TO LIFE THE KING'S STEWARD AND TWENTY MEN.

"On another occasion the steward of Aengus was travelling through the same territory (Musgraidhe Tire), and he met a herd of swine, and he directed his companions to kill one of them, and they did so and brought it to eat to an adjoining wood. But *the enemy* met them in the wood and killed the steward and twenty of his men on the banks of the river called Broanach; and as soon as Ciaran heard of this he was implored by his foster-brother, Cartach, who was either brother or grandson to King Aengus, and also by others, that he should proceed to where the dead bodies lay, and have them buried immediately, in order that the wild beasts should not devour them. When they arrived at the place where the bodies lay

Ciaran saw that there was not enough of men to bring them to the churchyard, and he spoke in a loud voice and said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ arise ye poor people and come along with me." And they all arose at once, and a wild boar arose with them, and a holy man of the district, named Eochaid, returned to his own master, and those who were brought became holy monks and lived with Ciaran ever after."

This anecdote shows the rapid spread of the Christian religion in Munster. In the last anecdote we saw the retainers of the King's court, which included the harpers, become Christians. Here we have the steward and labourers converted. The steward and his men were travelling through the same country as the harpers, namely Musgraidhe Tire, and they were surprised in a wood where the steward and twenty of his men were slain by "an enemy." Who can this enemy be but the same who had slain the harpers. It may be that those who refused to embrace Christianity were compelled to retire from the neighbourhood of the king's cities and to take refuge in the woods, and there surprised the king's fellow-believers. This, of course, cannot be proved, but from these repeated massacres, and in such large numbers, it is clear that a formidable conspiracy then existed against the progress of the Christian religion. The solicitude of Cartach and others that St. Ciaran should proceed at once to where the bodies of the murdered men lay in the wood, evinces their anxiety to have the obsequies performed with Christian solemnity, and not by the pagan priests, who are here probably likened to "wild beasts who would devour them."

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. CIARAN AND EITHNE VATHACH, QUEEN OF MUNSTER—THE STORY OF THE BLACKBERRIES—THE BANQUET OF THE KING OF OSSORY—THE UNLAWFUL ADVANCES AND SUBSEQUENT PENITENCE OF THE QUEEN—ST. CIARAN'S FORGIVENESS AND PREDICTION RESPECTING HER DEATH.

"Ciaran was travelling on another occasion and he happened to pass through a plain where a large quantity of blackberries grew, and he said that these very berries would be required hereafter, and he covered them up in order that the coldness of the approaching winter would not injure them, as he knew that, had they remained there for twelve months longer thus covered, they would rather improve than wither.

"On the occasion of a great banquet being given to Aengus, king of Munster, by one of his subjects, a chieftain, whose name was Concruidhe, king of Ossory, the king and queen and a numerous retinue came to partake of the banquet, and this was at Easter. And the queen fell desperately in love with Concruidhe at the dinner—for he was a very handsome and well-featured man. But Concruidhe would not yield to her solicitations, and the queen then feigned sickness in order that she could remain in the town [Baili] with Concruidhe after the king had left. And she said she would recover if she got blackberries to eat; as she supposed they could not be found at that season.

"Concruidhe then became greatly alarmed, through fear of the king, on account of the queen remaining behind, and he immediately repaired to his patron, St. Ciaran, and told him the whole affair. For every plain in Ossory belonged to Ciaran's parish. And as Ciaran heard this story he said that she should get blackberries to eat; and he proceeded direct to the place where he had left them preserved the previous autumn; and he brought a cask-full of them and sent them by Concruidhe to the queen, and after she had eat of them she immediately recovered from her illness, for her temptation left her at once. The queen, and those who eat of the berries, imagined them as sweet as honey, but the queen thought that it was a miracle that Ciaran wrought upon her. She went to him and threw herself down upon her knees, and in his presence confessed her sins and begged forgiveness for the same. And Ciaran prayed for her, and blessed her, and said 'I cannot save you from the death you were told would befall you, and the king himself will die on the same day in battle.'

"Eithne Vathach was the queen's name, and she was the daughter of

Crimthan MacEania, and St. Patrick foretold their death, which Ciaran also predicted at this time; and it so happened, as Aengus and the queen fell in the battle of *Cill Osna*, and the day on which the battle was fought was the 8th of the Ides of October, and St. Patrick died in the same year."

The fall and death of King Aengus and his queen is thus recorded in the "*Chronicum Scotorum*":—

"The battle of Cill Osnaigh in Magh Fea, in which fell Aengus Mac Nadfrach, king of Munhan, and his wife, i.e. Eithne, the hateful daughter of Crimthan."

From the history of this banquet, which marks the reconstruction of civil society in Ossory, we may infer that one of the conditions of the reconciliation of St. Ciaran with King Aengus was a public guarantee, on the part of the king, for the restoration of the independence of the kingdom of Ossory; and this great festive meeting was apparently intended to inaugurate the establishment of social and civil government, and most probably the crowning of Concruidhe as Regulus of that territory. The banquet was not held in Cashel but in the *baili* or mansion place of the King of Ossory, and the King and Queen of Munster attended there in state, surrounded by a numerous *retinue*, thus publicly to recognise the restored regality of the Ossorian dynasty and the recovered independence of its people. Who this king named Concruidhe was is not recorded. His name is not to be found in any pedigree of the Ossorian family. Consequently he must have been the first of the seven kings of Corca Laighe, who held possession of the government here for the next hundred and fifty years, and as such was a near relative of St. Ciaran at his mother's side. The anecdote of this banquet fully illustrates the character of Eithne Vathach. She was the immediate cause of the slaughter of the Ossorians, and now on the auspicious occasion of restored concord, her evil genius again throws a gloomy shade over hospitality and renewed friendship. Though St. Ciaran forgave her, and accepted her penitence, he also told her he could not avert the death which she had been told would befall her. Who predicted her this death? Apparently St. Ciaran himself, on the occasion of her marriage, when she instigated her husband against himself and his people. The writer of the Life says St. Patrick also foretold their untimely end to both the King and Queen. This prediction of the apostle was most probably uttered when King Aengus was struck blind for his irreverence on the

occasion of St. Ciaran reproaching him for the massacre of the Ossorians and the seizure of their lands—all the evils of which had been fomented by the machinations of this vicious woman. The story of the preservation of the blackberries by the saint, and of their curative properties on the moral and physical constitution of the Queen, though simple and homely in its associations, is, nevertheless, superior to any commentary of mine. I will, therefore, leave its explanation to the criticism of the reader. Whether King Aengus was made aware of the events first narrated does not appear from the legend. In the next chapter we find him conferring on St. Ciaran the most signal favour yet bestowed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ST. PATRICK AND KING AENGUS PAY A FAREWELL VISIT TO ST. CIARAN
AT SAIGHIR—THEY ARE HOSPITABLY RECEIVED AND ENTERTAINED
—THE COMPLETION OF THE THIRTY YEARS' PROPHECY.

"On another occasion St. Patrick and Aengus Mac Nadfrach went with an immense multitude to Saighir, where Ciaran dwelt, and besides the other food prepared for dinner, eight bullocks were killed for the occasion. Some one said to Ciaran 'What signifies this quantity of meat for such an immense number of guests?' Ciaran replied 'He who fed thousands in the wilderness on a few loaves of bread, and a few small fishes, will also feed these men.' And he blessed his own well and turned it into wine, and though immense the multitude assembled, it so happened, through the grace of God and Ciaran, that they had plenty of food and drink."

This visit of St. Patrick to Saighir is the accomplishment of the prediction usually termed the "Thirty Years' Prophecy." That Patrick did pronounce such a prediction I do not undertake to affirm; but that he did visit St. Ciaran at Saighir is here duly recorded, and that the date of that visit was precisely thirty years from the parting of the two saints on the Continent, we can very clearly establish.

St. Patrick entered Munster, according to the calculations of Dr. Lanigan, in the year A.D. 445; of Sir James Ware, in A.D. 448; and of Archbishop Ussher, in A.D. 449. I accept of the date fixed on by Ware as the correct one, because it best synchronizes with the Chronology of St. Ciaran's Life. It was in the same year that St. Patrick visited Munster that he had passed through Ossory, where, having made some stay with St. Ciaran, and subsequently received St. Declan at Hynneone, near Clonmel, it must, in consequence, have been late in that year when he entered the City of Cashel; nor is it probable that the conversion and baptism of King Aengus could have been completed before the year 450, from which, it is certain, that the visit to Saighir could not have occurred anterior to that date. Neither could it have taken place before the reconciliation of King Aengus with St. Ciaran, which does not appear to have been effected for one or two years subsequent to the entry of St. Patrick into Cashel. After the reconciliation between the saint and the King the next event recorded in the biography is the martyrdom of the eight harpers, in the details

of which St. Ciaran acted so important a part. Next the king's steward and twenty of his workmen are slain in a wood, and St. Ciaran is again importuned to proceed there to bestow on them the grace of Christian burial. Then in an autumn subsequent to all these transactions, the saint covers up the blackberries which he apprehended would perish during the ensuing winter, and at the Easter time or spring of the following year, the great banquet took place in Ossory, when the king and his queen attended there in state to inaugurate the restoration of the kingship of that territory, which events, judging from the meagre outlines of Ciaran's biography, must have been spread over a period of four or five years from the baptism of King Aengus, and therefore the visit to Saighir did not occur anterior to A.D. 454 or '55, which brings us to the date of the departure of St. Patrick from the kingdom of Munster; and as he entered that province in the end of 448, or beginning of 449, and remained there for seven years,¹ his departure thence took place in the year 455, precisely thirty years since A.D. 425, when the two saints separated on the Continent; and thus the journey of St. Patrick out of Munster gives us both the date and the object of his visit in company with King Aengus to St. Ciaran at Saighir; and we have now to inquire by what road did Patrick retire from Munster. The Irish apostle, after leaving Desmond, passed through Desii, then forded the Suir and proceeded through Musgraidhe Tire or Ormonde, to the north-east of the present County of Tipperary, whence he entered the ancient territory of Eilie, now partly represented by the barony of Eliogarty, and keeping to the west of the Slieve-Bloom mountains his road conducted him close to the present town of Birr, where he found himself in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Ciaran's monastery at Saighir. That this was St. Patrick's road out of Munster is rendered still more certain from a passage in the Tripartite, which represents the apostle's next station, after leaving Munster, to be on the river Brosna,² in the now King's County, which same river is mentioned in an anecdote in the Life of St. Ciaran, to be yet quoted, as being

¹ "Seven years." See the authority for this statement above, p. 21, n. 2.

² "Brosna River." On this point Lanigan writes, "Jocelin (cap. 77), and the third Life (cap. 63) have the *river Brosna*. There is a river of that name which, flowing through the King's County, falls into the Shannon near Banagher. The Tripartite does not mention a river, but seems to allude to a town or small district of that name. Whether it was the town or the river that St. Patrick arrived at is of little consequence." Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1., p. 303, n. 110.

contiguous to "St Ciaran's Citadel." The journey of the apostle out of the kingdom of Munster is described in nearly the same words as Ciaran's biographer relates his visit in company with King Aengus to Saighir. Dr. Lanigan¹ paraphrasing the Tripartite, thus describes the departure of the apostle out of that kingdom :—

"Having now spent seven years in Munster he set out on his return to Leinster, and was followed by the chieftains and multitudes of people from all parts of that province, who wished to take their leave of him and receive his blessing, which from an eminence he cheerfully bestowed on them."

This was the "immense multitude" which accompanied "St. Patrick and Aengus MacNadhfrach to Saighir, where Ciaran dwelt." It is probable that the apostle selected this road for his journey out of Munster, specially to pay a farewell visit to his old tutor in Italy, his fellow-labourer in Ireland, and to whom, next to God, he was indebted for the Irish apostleship—this being, in all human probability, the last opportunity they would have of meeting in this world. These two venerable men were then far advanced in years, St. Ciaran being then eighty years old, and St. Patrick sixty-six. How interesting the communing of those two patriarchs as they reviewed their respective careers, and marvelled at the way in which Providence had interwoven their mutual histories. It was then fifty years since Ciaran, migrating from his native shores, landed in Gaul, in search of, to him then, an unknown truth, and by the same fleet, and most probably in the same ship in which he sailed, Patrick was carried back a captive to Ireland. Having spent some years in the school of St. Honoratus, or elsewhere in Italy, and having been there consecrated bishop, St. Ciaran determined to return to his native land, but by a providential arrangement he interrupted his journey to pay a visit to the great school of St. Honoratus, and whilst residing in this institution Patrick arrived from the Bishop of Auxerre with recommendations to become an *alumnus* of that school. Here Ciaran made his acquaintance, and, learning his history, ordained him priest, and destined him for the conversion of Ireland. It will not be too great an encroachment on the province of conjecture on this, the last colloquy of the two saints, for Patrick thus to address St. Ciaran: "In that school I sat at your feet and learned wisdom from your lips. You presented me to Germanus for authority to undertake the Irish mission

¹ "Dr. Lanigan." Ecclesiastical History, Vol. i., p. 289, note 89.

that we might accompany each other to this your native land. But Providence had arranged it otherwise. On our separation in the house of Bishop Germanus, I promised to follow you to Ireland, and to meet you in your church, and though it is now thirty years since that promise was given, it is only to-day that the latter part of it has been fulfilled. And the scribe of the day, anxious to give every word and act of the saint a miraculous significance, converts the context of the apostle's words, from being simply the completion of a certain number of years, into the accomplishment of a prediction, and thus originated the story of the "Thirty Years' Prophecy."

St. Ciaran having hospitably entertained the Irish apostle, the King of Munster, and the "immense multitude" who accompanied them, the two saints took a final farewell of each other, and of their illustrious convert, King Aengus, after which St. Patrick ascended one of the ridges of *Sliabh Bladhma* and pronounced his parting benediction on the king, the people, and the land of Munster, and then resuming his journey through the present King's County and Westmeath he gained the province of Ulster, where we shall now leave him to found the metropolitan church of Armagh, and return to the narrative of the closing scenes of St. Ciaran's life.

It is significant that in the Legend of St. Ciaran's biography, the visit of the Irish apostle to Saighir is the last event in the narrative, but three, that can lay claim to any foundation in fact, and these three are the departure of Cartach for Rome, the vocation of Odhran and Meadhran, and the return of Cartach to Saighir, which three events immediately preceded the retirement of St. Ciaran from the government of that church. Down to the visit of St. Patrick to Saighir the anecdotes in the life of the saint, though rather richly draped in pious extravagance, have each a foundation in fact, and are, as we have seen, susceptible of highly interesting, historical, and topographical illustrations. But from the visit to Saighir, to the return of Cartach from Rome (with the exception of the three anecdotes noted above), the stories are either so fabulous or so surrounded by anachronisms, as to be either incompatible with history or to be out of place in the narrative. Whence it would appear that the farewell visit of the Irish apostle to St. Ciaran formed the closing scene in the public mission of the latter, and that the the stories that follow are founded on events that belong to the previous part of his life, or are so many imaginary

transactions so fitted together as to fill up the interval between the visit of St. Patrick to Saighir and the retirement of St. Ciaran from the priorship of that monastery.

It is also to be noted here that after the farewell visit of St. Patrick and King Aengus to Saighir, their names and existence are completely ignored in the Legend. In the most abrupt manner we are introduced to another king as now reigning in Cashel; and with equal haste we find ourselves the contemporaries of saints and personages who were living near a century later than the times of King Aengus or the Irish Apostle, and, in consequence, the residue of Ciaran's biography does not reflect much light on the closing scenes of his earthly career. We shall, however, supply the anecdotes as they are narrated in the Legend, arranging those referred to above, and which purport to deal with historical matter, into chronological order—claiming no more in favour of their authenticity, nor for our own commentary on them, than they both intrinsically merit.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEPARTURE OF ST. CARTACH FOR ROME—SUNDRY MIRACLES OF
ST. CIARAN.

“Ciaran’s foster-brother, of whom we have already spoken, viz.: Cartach and a young lady of Ciaran’s community, whose name was Laiden, fell deeply in love with each other, and evil thoughts polluted their minds, so much so that they made an appointment in order to meet each other, and thereby to satisfy their lustful desires; but on arriving at the appointed place, a flash of lightning fell between them, and they narrowly escaped being burned, and they became so terrified that they could not utter a single word, and they returned home. The virgin became blind while she lived, which was not too great a punishment for a woman that would pollute her own soul with sin to be deprived of the light of this world. Cartach immediately got penitent and became a pilgrim; Ciaran’s sanctity was manifested in this miracle, as God was not willing to allow those two youths who were under his [Ciaran’s] care to commit sin, for Ciaran was truly exemplary in watching over his flock.”

There are four references to Cartach in the Life of St. Ciaran. When Aengus was struck with blindness for his irreverence to the saint, it is said “a foster-brother of Ciaran’s, and a relative of the king, implored Ciaran to restore his sight.” Subsequently, when the steward and workpeople of King Aengus were murdered in the wood, St Ciaran was implored by “his foster-brother, Cartach, who was either brother or grand-son to King Aengus,” to give them Christian burial. In the anecdote just narrated Cartach is simply called “the foster-brother of Ciaran;” and in a passage to be yet quoted, he is designated “the son of the King of Munster.” Of those different degrees of kindred, that of son of King Aengus agrees best with the several circumstances connected with the two personages. King Aengus’s marriage with Eithne Vathach took place about six years before his baptism, and about eight or nine years after that marriage St. Ciaran visited him at Cashel, and at that time Cartach was one of his disciples, and consequently could not have been the son of Aengus by his present wife. But there are strong grounds for asserting that King Aengus was far more advanced in years than his consort, who, at the time of her marriage, was probably not twenty years

of age, whilst her lord was over fifty, which may account for the power of her influence on him at the time of their marriage. But King Aengus had not been leading a life of celibacy up to that time, for we have seen above (p. 113, n. 1,) that he had other wives before his union with Eithne Vathach, and there cannot be a doubt that Cartach was a son of his by one of those ladies. Aengus, the Culdee, expressly styles him "The Royal Cartach." He appears to have been placed, whilst a youth, under the care of St. Ciaran, who entertained towards him the kindest regards; he is denominated the "foster-brother" of the saint, which comes from the Irish word *daltha*, a pet or favourite. Colgan renders it *alumnus*, young student or schoolboy, which gives us a good idea of the age of Cartach when he was first introduced to our notice, which was, as already observed, on the occasion of St. Ciaran's first visit to Cashel after the baptism of the king. The date of that visit was about the year 451, at which time Cartach was most probably fifteen years¹ of age, and an important question here arises respecting

¹ "Fifteen years." Dr. Lanigan thinks he was 17 or 18 years. If Cartach was fifteen years old in A.D. 450 he could not have ordained Mochuda or Cartach, junior, priest in A.D. 580, as Dr. Lanigan calculates. See Ecclesiastical History, vol. 11, pp. 98, 99, 350, 351. The following anecdote is related in the Life of Cartach, jun.:—"Mochuda, or Cartach of Lismore, when a boy, was one day tending swine near the river Mang, in Kerry, and Cartach, the elder, and his disciples passed through the meadow chanting their psalms, which so captivated the swine-herd, that he followed them to the monastery, and on his return, being questioned by his master respecting his absence, answered: 'I did not come back, my master, because I was charmed by that divine song which I heard from the holy clerics, and I never heard anything like that song; and they sang all the way long, and in the monastery until bed-time; and when all had gone to bed, the bishop alone sang it until late in the night. Master, I wish I was with them to learn that song.' On hearing this, the Chieftain sent for Cartach, the elder, and delivered the young Mochuda to him who, being instructed, was ultimately ordained priest by the hands of St. Cartach, the elder, about the year 580, according to Dr. Lanigan's calculation.

If this story be true, Cartach, the elder, named in it, cannot be the same person as Cartach the disciple of St. Ciaran, who was a boy in the middle of the fifth century. The writers of the old lives of the Irish saints had but poor opportunities of comparing dates or analysing historical matter, whilst, at the same time, their prolific imaginations generally supplied materials for filling in the meagre outlines of their biographical sketches; and hence their compilations abound in anachronisms, and are to be more admired for their pious sentimentalism than lightly accepted as facts, till first proved by genuine criticism. It is positively asserted by ancient writers that St. Patrick was consecrated bishop in the city of Rome, and by the hands of St. Celestine; yet it has been recently established by the researches of the [now Most] Rev. Dr. Moran, that it was in the church of another city, and by the hands of a very different bishop, that the future apostle received episcopal ordination. See "Notes on St. Patrick," Irish Ecclesiastical Record, October, 1866. The writer of the Life of

the date of Cartach's departure from Saighir. He certainly was at home on the occasion of the murder of the king's steward, which, from its place in the narrative, must have occurred about the year 454. But whether he was at home at the time of St. Patrick's visit to Saighir is not expressly recorded; but if the narratives in the biography of St. Cairan be consecutively arranged, as the historical ones appear to be, Cartach did not leave Saighir till after the visit of the Irish apostle and King Aengus to that church in A.D. 455. It appears probable that it was Cartach who said to Ciaran on that occasion "What signifies this quantity of meat for such an immense multitude of guests." The answer of the saint, and his reference to the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, when twelve baskets of fragments were left unconsumed, taken in connection with the blessing of the well and the changing of its waters into wine, which probably means that wine was as plenty as water, all of which clearly imply a superabundance of good things at the banquet, and where there is superabundance there are generally excesses. There can be no doubt that during this great festive gathering, and out of regard for their illustrious visitors, the rigid discipline of the monastery was temporarily relaxed, which relaxation, coupled with a superabundance of viands and wines, led to excesses, and that to some such excess, on the part of the youthful Cartach, must be attributed the act which incurred his master's displeasure. Cartach at that period would be about twenty years of age, and if this was the date of his departure from Saighir, he would have commenced his journey to Rome in A.D. 445-6. He is said to have spent seven years as a pilgrim, studying the scriptures and acquiring a competent knowledge of ecclesiastical science, and until his return we shall entertain ourselves with the interesting anecdotes recorded by our author, as so many events in the life of St. Ciaran during the absence of Cartach on the Continent.

Ciaran makes him a school-boy of St. Finnan's, at Clonard, in A.D. 540, and a predecessor of St. Patrick in A.D. 430. And in the same way the writer of the Life of Mochuda, or Cartach, jun., makes him be ordained priest by St. Cartach, the elder, who could not be living later than about A.D. 520, though the same Mochuda is reported to have departed this life in A.D. 637. By following the sweetly told anecdotes of the old writers, Dr. Lanigan involved himself in labyrinths of difficulties from which he could only extricate himself by an edifice of conjectures. See Ecclesiastical History, Vol. II., pp. 98-100, *et seq.*, and in numerous other places.

SUNDRY MIRACLES PERFORMED BY ST. CIARAN.

“On another occasion the king of Tara and a large number of followers went to take hostages of spoils from the Mummonians, but Oiliol, king of Cashel, would not submit, but prepared for action all his troops to meet him in battle ; and both kings, with their armies, met near Ciaran’s citadel. and Ciaran endeavoured to reconcile them, but they would not be reconciled. But he [Ciaran] received from God what he could not obtain from proud and haughty man. A large wood grew up in front of the Mummonians when going to fight, and the water of the Brosna river overflowed its banks in front of the Meath men so that they dare not cross, and as soon as both armies saw the miracles they became terribly afraid, and the king of Meath turned his back to the stream and returned home on seeing the small rivulet that had been fordable a few moments previously, swollen to such an alarming extent.

“The Mummonians remained for the night in the vicinity of Ciaran’s citadel, and Ciaran prepared a pig and a cow for the king’s dinner, and he satisfied himself and his army in that meal and there was some left, and they glorified God and Ciaran for his marvellous miracle.”

Aengus MacNadhfrach was King of Cashel during the life of St. Ciaran. Oiliol Olum was King of Munster two hundred years before Ciaran’s time. Who this Oiliol, King of Cashel was, who is named in the anecdote, cannot be discovered, as there was no such king of Cashel within a century either before or after the period of St. Ciaran’s life. The river Brosna, mentioned in the text, is the same as that mentioned in the Tripartite, where St. Patrick was entertained by a Bishop named Trian, on the journey of the Apostle through the territory of Eilie, after he had taken his farewell of St. Ciaran and King Aengus at Saighir.

ST. CIARAN SENDS OXEN TO PLOUGH ST. COINCHE’S LANDS.

“On another occasion, Ciaran sent a yoke of Oxen to St. Coinche, to plough her lands ; and she knew that it was Ciaran sent them ; and the distance was very long between the city of St. Ciaran and the monastery of St. Coinche, which is situated at Ros-Beanchor, on the sea-coast, in the south of Ireland. And the oxen ploughed of themselves ; and when spring was over, they returned home to Ciaran without any one to lead them.”

St. Coinche was St. Ciaran’s nurse, and if she was governing the monastery of Ros-Beanchor at the period of his life now under consideration, she should be over one hundred years of age. The anecdote

dote is interesting, as it shows how very ancient is the use of the plough in Ireland.

ST. CIARAN VISITS HIS MOTHER'S MONASTERY EVERY CHRISTMAS.

"Ciaran was in the habit of administering the holy Communion on every Christmas-eve to his own community at Saighir, by his own hands; and also of visiting the monastery of his mother at Ros-Beanchor, in order that, at his own hands, she should receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the sacrament, and return to his own monastery on the same evening. We are to infer from this that it was God who performed the miracle, as he did with Habecock, when he brought him from India to his own country and back again in a few moments."

It is highly probable that St. Ciaran would visit his mother at her monastery in Ros-Beanchor every Christmas, and return before the close of that season to his own church during her life. But if these anecdotes be chronologically arranged in the legend, she should have been over one hundred years of age at the period of St. Ciaran's life at which we are now arrived. Those visits of Ciaran's to Ros-Beanchor, must be understood of the period of his mission previous to his departure from Ossory to Saighir, in the year 445. After that date his mother and his nurse were gone to heaven.

"St. Coinche was in the habit of praying to the Lord on her knees on a huge rock near the sea-coast, a short distance from the monastery, and the rock's name now is "*Carrig Coinche*" [i.e. Conchy's rock], and the tide occasionally surrounded it. But Ciaran went one day to the rock, and it floated on the waters with him, and returned to its own site again, when it was Ciaran's wish that it should do so. We are not astonished at this when it is written—"Mirabilis Deus in Sanctus suis." Psalm 135.

This same extraordinary phenomenon is thus commemorated in the Martyrology of Donegal, at the 5th March:—

"It was he [Ciaran] that used to go to the sea-rock that was far distant in the sea (where his nurse Coca was), without ship or boat, and used to return again, as appears from his own Life, chap. 19."

ST. CIARAN CONVERTS A GANG OF ROBBERS INTO MONKS.

"On another occasion, haughty Kearnes made incursions into Munster, and commenced depredations by taking cattle, and murdering the inhabitants. But a great man, a native of Munster, named Longan, pursued the Kearnes, and overtook them, and put them to flight. But seeing no hope of escaping, they implored Ciaran to save them from their

perilous position ; and when Longan and his followers thought it was time to murder them, a flash of lightning fell between him and the spoilers, which greatly terrified Longan and his followers, who gave up any further pursuit, but returned home to his own habitation ; and the robbers knew that they had escaped through the miraculous intercession of Ciaran, and they submitted to him, and related all that had occurred, and resolved on becoming monks, and serving God and Ciaran, and leading a holy life for the rest of their days ; and they lived with Ciaran performing pious and holy works ever after."

This anecdote may be accepted as true, without the aid of any miraculous intervention, and proves the correctness of the views advanced above in chap. XII., p. 125, viz., that the first monks of St. Ciaran at Saighir were composed of reformed robbers and outlaws.

A THIEF IS PUNISHED FOR STEALING ST. CIARAN'S COW.

"On another occasion a thief from Leinster stole a very fine cow which belonged to Ciaran's community or monks. His name was Cairbre ; but on his way to Sliabh Bladhma, where he was taking the cow, he was so enveloped in a cloud of mist and darkness that he could not make his way, but fell into the river and was drowned, and the cow came back again to Ciaran and his monks."

The mountain here denominated Sliabh Bladhma is that now well known by the name of Slieve Bloom. The anecdote can be accepted as literally true, and may have happened either before or after the death of St. Ciaran.

ST. CIARAN RESTORES A LADY TO LIFE IN THREE DAYS.

"A lady named Eitile was travelling on one occasion ; she fell and broke her bones, and died of the hurt. But Ciaran restored her to life in three days, and she bestowed on Ciaran the lands on which she got the fall, and the place is now called "*Lein Eitile*" [i.e. Eitile's Leap], and she thanked God and Ciaran."

This land was apparently the property of the monastery at the time when the Life of St. Ciaran was being written, and the object of recording the anecdote was probably to show the title on which that land was held as belonging to the estate of the church of Saighir. This place is now called "The Leap,"¹ a well-known locality within two miles of Seirkieran church.

¹ "The Leap." This locality was apparently well known by that name ever since the restoration of this lady to life by St. Ciaran. In an Inquisition held in "Leap Castle" in 1568, it is denominated "*Lemyvanane*," which the Four Masters, in 1516, render in Irish *Laeim-i-Banain*, i.e., O'Banan's Leap. O'Banan was a local chieftain, from whom the castle there was so called.

ST. CIARAN RESTORES A MURDERED MAN TO LIFE IN SEVEN DAYS.

"A subject belonging to the King, whose name was Ceanfaladh, murdered Croman, a friend of Ciaran's, and Ciaran restored him to life in seven days, in Christ's name, and on his being brought to life Ciaran said, in the presence of the people, "He that murdered you illegally, *i.e.* Ceanfaladh, shall soon be murdered himself, and his body burned in the castle called Rathundy, in Eileach."

ST. CIARAN RESTORES HIS SPEECH TO THE KING OF MUNSTER.

"On another occasion Oiliole, King of Munster, addressed Ciaran in brutal language, and left him in great anger; but not long after till the king became dumb, being for eight days unable to utter a word. He came to Ciaran, and, prostrating himself before him, repented and asked forgiveness. And when Ciaran saw that he was truly penitent he blessed his tongue, and the king immediately spoke in a clear voice, and, on receiving Ciaran's blessing, he went home sound, glorifying God and Ciaran."

It has been already stated that no king named Oiliole governed Munster during Ciaran's life. But it is probable that Aengus MacNadhfrach is here, and in the previous story, named Oiliole, from having been of the race of Oiliole Olum. Hence this last story (like most of those which precede it in this chapter), if it has any foundation at all, belongs to the previous years of St. Ciaran's mission, and appears to be but a repetition, with some modification, of the interview between King Aengus and St. Ciaran, when the former was struck with blindness for his irreverence.

CHAPTER XX.

THE VOCATION OF ODHRAN AND MEADHRAN—THE RETURN OF CARTACH TO SAIGHIR—THE AGE OF ST. CIARAN AND HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE MONASTERY.

These anecdotes are here placed in one section, as they mutually illustrate each other, and assist us in determining the period of St. Ciaran's life at which we are now arrived.

"Two brothers, whose names were Odhran and Meadhran, from the town [baile] of Lothre, in Musgraidhe Tire, came to Ciaran to consult him and ask his advice as to whether they would become pilgrims, and travel into foreign lands, and arriving at Saighir one of them expressed a wish for remaining with Ciaran himself. This man was Meadhran; and Odhran said to him, "Brother, this was not what you promised me," and he implored Ciaran not to retain his brother. Ciaran said to him, "God will decide between us who shall have him; let him take this torch in his hand, and breathe upon it, and if it light he shall remain with me, but if not he may go with you. He then took the torch in his hand and breathed upon it, and the torch lit immediately, and he remained with Ciaran ever after, led a holy life, and performed works of charity. Ciaran then spoke to Odhran, and said, "I say unto you Odhran that had you travelled the world all over it is in your own native town¹ of Lothra you shall die, and, therefore, return home and live there, as it is after you the place will be named for ever." Odhran returned to his native place, built a magnificent

¹ "Native town." Odhran, the elder of these two brothers, was the founder of the great monastic institution near Nenagh, in the now County of Tipperary, anciently called *Lathrach-Odhran*, or *Larach-oran*, where his festival day used to be observed on the 2nd October, and is thus entered in the Martyrology of Donegal: "Odhran, of Letir, [*i.e.* *Lathrach*], and he is Odhran, the master and the brother of Meadhran. It was Odhran, the master, and MacCuilinn, of Lusca [*Lusk*], who told to Ciaran, of Cluain, that his life was cut short." This St. Odhran was apparently the founder and patron of the original church of Tullaroan, seven miles north-west of the City of Kilkenny, the parish of which still retains his name, *viz.*, *Tulach-Odhran*, *i.e.* the *tulach* or *tumulus* of Odhran, or Oran. This great pile of earth is still standing within about one hundred perches of the old church, and is locally known as the "moat." "We read in his Life," says the legend, "that he [Odhran] ascended into heaven," which we may understand of his having retired late in life from the busy scenes of his monastery to the solitude of this secluded valley, where, having closed his earthly career, his disciples, who accompanied him into this solitude, having laid him to repose according to the custom of the age, erected over his grave this memorial-mound, which still perpetuates his name, and the hystiographer of his house, ignorant alike of the place of his retreat, and of his departure out of this world, with true bardic license, concluded and recorded "that he had ascended into heaven." This *tulach* of Odhran is noticed by Sheffield Grace in his "Memoirs of the Grace Family," amongst the antiquities of the "Parish of

monastery, led a virtuous and holy life, and wrought many miracles. We read in his Life that he ascended into heaven, and Ciaran's words were literally fulfilled, and the place is ever since called Lathra-Odhran."

This is the first occasion on which any of the saints of the sixth century have been introduced to our notice in the Legend of St. Ciaran's life, and the position which the anecdote occupies in the Legend proves that the writer paid attention to the chronological arrangement of the several parts of his narrative. This anecdote of the vocation of Odhran and Meadhran is placed just before the return of St. Cartach from the Continent, which would be about the year 462 or 463, at which period Odhran and Meadhran were two children, say from ten to fourteen years of age. If Odhran was then fourteen years old, and if he lived to be eighty years, he would die about the year 540. According to the Four Masters he died in A.D. 548. But he might live to be ninety years. Many in our own time have attained, and even exceeded that age, and if Odhran lived to be ninety years, and that he was fourteen when he was presented to St. Ciaran, he would die, as the Four Masters record, in the year 548. So that if we denude this very beautiful anecdote of its bardic embellishments it presents to us these two young boys seeking admission into Ciaran's monastery at Saighir, in about the eighty-seventh year of his age.

THE RETURN OF CARTACH TO SAIGHIR.

"Ciaran and a hermit, whose name was Geaman, went one night to bathe in a stream of cold water, and when some time in the water Geaman said to Ciaran, 'I cannot bear remaining any longer in this water,' but devotion moved them like heat in a bath, and both began to praise God. Ciaran said to Geaman, 'A beloved friend shall visit us to-morrow, *i.e.* Cartach, son of the King of Munster, and my own favourite disciple, whom I sent on a pilgrimage on account of a sin which he contemplated, had not God and I prevented him. For I did not like to see his piety and devotion destroyed. He is now reformed, he has received absolution for

Tullaroan." From the peculiarities of its outlines and configuration he supposed it to have been in pagan times the theatre of great popular assemblages. Down to the year 1835 it was the scene of the popular sports, amusements, and factions of sundry characters during the great "Patron" of Tullaroan, which was held uninterrupted from the 15th August to the following Sunday, till abolished, on account of its excesses, by Dr. Kinsella, the then bishop of the diocese, after which the moat was planted with pines by the late W. F. Finn, Esq., better known as Counsellor Finn, which, having since grown up into stately proportions, have made this ancient pile the most prominent feature in the varied landscape of the picturesque valley of Tullaroan.

his sins, and is cleansed from his transgressions. Take you this fish hovering about here for the sake of my dearly-beloved son.' And Geaman took the fish, as he was told by Ciaran, and on the next day Cartach came as Ciaran promised."

St. Cartach was St. Ciaran's successor in the church of Saighir, and his journey to the Continent, irrespective of its more immediate cause, was intended by St. Ciaran to introduce him into those institutions where the science of Christianity had been then cultivated, and where he would be so trained in ecclesiastical discipline as to be qualified to assume the government of the church of Saighir, for which he had long previously intended him. Cartach had been the favourite disciple of St. Ciaran; he received him when a child, and his boyish simplicity appears to have excited in his favour the kindest regards of his master. On the discovery by St. Ciaran of his contemplated transgression he became penitent on the instant, and flew to his master for forgiveness. St. Ciaran, appreciating the soundness of his virtue from the depth of his remorse, welcomed his return to the path of innocence from which he had nearly strayed, and apparently to remove him from the occasion of offence, as well as to afford him an opportunity of perfecting himself in ecclesiastical studies, imposed it as a penance on him that he should travel as a pilgrim into foreign countries, and that he should not return to Saighir for seven years.

Yet it is probable that the kindly regards and strong partiality entertained by St. Ciaran in favour of Cartach had their foundation in family ties. Aengus MacNadhfrach and St. Ciaran were second cousins, and as Cartach was the son of King Aengus, he and St. Ciaran would be second and third cousins, which the clanish institutions of the time recognised as members of the one family, and hence there can be no doubt that St. Ciaran's principal object in sending Cartach to travel was to qualify him to become his own successor in the church of Saighir. We have seen above that the date of Cartach's departure from Saighir must have been about the same as that of the visit of the Irish apostle and King Aengus to that church in the year 455, at which date St. Ciaran was 80 years of age; and, as Cartach remained on the Continent for seven years, the date of his return will bring us to A.D. 462, at which period St. Ciaran had attained his eighty-seventh year in this world, which the "Martyrology of Donegal" thus commemorates:—"Sixty years and three hundred was his age when he resigned his

spirit. Ciaran dedicated his congregation to God and to Cartach."

"A very old vellum book,¹ in which are found the Martyrology of Maelruain, of Tamhlacht, and many other matters which relate to the saints and their mothers, states that Ciaran of Saighir was, in his manner and life, like unto Pope Clement."

It was not without reason that the compiler of the old vellum book compared our saint unto Pope Clement. In a beautiful fresco painting,¹ found some few years since in a subterranean chapel under the church of the Dominicans in Rome, Pope Clement is there represented in the performance of the nuptial ceremony, and is robed as a tall, dignified personage. In the legend of St. Ciaran's Life, it is recorded of him that in his youth all who beheld him were surprised at his great stature, as also at the rapid maturity of mind and body which he attained with his growth in years. The meagre outlines preserved of his character, exhibit him in his acts and conversation as a man of mild and reserved dignity, much given to silence, vigilance, and study. "Till his death he never tasted strong drink, nor did he wear warm or fine clothing, nor did he indulge in feasts or much sleep," and in consequence preserved his vigour of mind and body to a very advanced stage of life. But centuries before his day the King Prophet of Israel had experienced the goal of life, when he sung—"The days of our years are three score and ten, and if, by reason of their strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Hence we can understand that at the period of the return of Cartach from Rome, St. Ciaran had been far gone in the wane of life, and that the great transition from time to eternity had already forecast its shadows on his soul, and inspired him with the conviction that he had run his race, and that he should now be soon gathered to his fathers. Hence the emotions of delight with which he hails the return to Saighir of his beloved cousin and dear disciple Cartach, into whose hands he now resigns the charge of his church and community, after which he retires in silence to spend his declining years in seclusion from the world.

¹ "Old Vellum Book." See Martyrology of Donegal at 5th March.

¹ "Fresco." This beautiful painting was photographed about ten years since, many copies of which thus produced are now in circulation. One of them is in the possession of Rev. E. Callanan, St. Mary's Presbytery, Kilkenny.

CHAPTER XXI.

FABULOUS AGE OF ST. CIARAN—THE STORY OF THE FOUR RED COWS AND
ST. CIARAN OF CLONMACNOISE.

Down to the period of Cartach's departure from Ireland, no reference is made in the *Life of St. Ciaran to Finian, or Brendan, or Ciaran of Cluain, or to any of the other illustrious men who ornamented the Irish church during the sixth century.* After the return of Cartach, when the earthly career of Ciaran was drawing to a close, and when, like other saints of his time, he withdrew from the distracting scenes of the missionary life, to seek repose in undisturbed seclusion, and his disciples taking it for granted that he was still living, the scribe of the time who magnified his ordinary actions into miraculous events, now, by a species of pious credulity, extended his age to a degree of supernatural longevity which made him the contemporary of men who, in the ordinary course of nature, could not have been born till long after his departure out of this world. Whether the author of Ciaran's biography was conscious of his gross anachronism in representing the saint as being still living in the latter half of the sixth century—after having made him precede St. Patrick in the fifth—I will not undertake to affirm or disprove. But as he had represented the saint, in the early part of the legend, to have been the contemporary and familiar friend of the Irish Apostle, and of the King and Queen of Munster, it was now necessary, after their decease, to find materials for the history of his *Life during the sixth century, and the following interesting anecdotes are introduced by our author as the actions of the missionary life of St. Ciaran during that period.* But the internal testimony of those events or actions attributed to this period of St. Ciaran's life, proves that they had been specially put together to suit the exigencies of the age in which the writer lived, when the churches of Ireland were being then desecrated by the Danes—when the rights of the church of Saighir had been probably encroached on, its exercises interrupted, or its institutions fallen in popular respect; and the biographer of Ciaran, who was both bishop and abbot of that church, with the object of defending its privileges and institutions, by exciting popular veneration in their favour, compiled those beautiful stories or parables to stamp the authority of Ciaran's name on the customs and immunities of his

house. These anecdotes are highly interesting as incidental portraits of some of the ecclesiastical practices and social usages of the age in which the Life of Ciaran was written, and as such are entitled to a place in this Memoir.

ST. CIARAN OF CLONMACNOISE AND THE FOUR RED COWS.

“St. Ciaran, of Clonmacnoise, held in his possession some riches which the King of Leinster had deposited for safety in his hands; but Ciaran being a good and holy man, and full of mercy, distributed a large amount of the money among the poor. Thereupon the king had the saint taken prisoner, and put in fetters; but on a certain day the king came and said to the saint, “If I get four red cows, and you put four white heads upon them, I will set you free.” Ciaran said, “God can perform this, and allow me to go and seek out the cattle, and if I don’t find them I shall return to you again.”

“Ciaran was allowed to go, and he came to Saighir, where the other Ciaran lived, and he told him his story. And at that time the two Brendans were on a visit with Ciaran, and they were glad of Ciaran of Cluain’s arrival. And Ciaran’s [the elder] servant said to him that he had no food to eat but meat, and Ciaran said, “Prepare whatever you have quickly;” and when the meat was boiled Ciaran blessed it, and it changed in their presence into oil first, and porridge and other delicacies, according as he liked it, and it happened by God’s grace that all the vessels in the house were filled with highly-flavoured wines for the saints’ dinner.”

There was a monk in the house who was not willing to dine with the saints, viz., MacCongain, and he said that he would not partake of the food which was made from the meat [it being a fast *day*]; and Ciaran said to him, “You will eat meat in Lent, and your enemies will murder you on the very day that you eat it, and they will take off your head, and you shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven, and your days shall be spent in misery, and you shall resign the order of the monastery.” And Ciaran’s words turned out true, for he was murdered very near Saighir Ciaran.”

It is easy to recognise in this last paragraph of the anecdote a severe admonition, specially administered to some self-sufficient monk in the time of the writer, who, being deluded by his faith in his own righteousness and love of singularity, forgot what he should have known from the Scriptures, namely, that “obedience is better than sacrifice.” The legend proceeds:—

“It was at this time that these four holy men, viz., the two Ciarans and the two Brendans, *made a covenant among themselves and their Coarbs*

after them. And on Ciaran [of Clonmacnoise] taking his leave, and receiving the blessing of the other holy men, and not knowing where to find the cows he had promised the king, Ciaran of Saighir accompanied him part of the way to direct him, and on parting they blessed each other. Ciaran of Cluain, said, 'Let the result of my blessing be riches and much treasure and wealth in your town for ever.' And Ciaran of Saighir said, 'Let virtue, wisdom, and piety, through my blessing dwell upon your habitation for ever.' And these words turned out true to both parties. And on arriving at the ford called Ath-sallagh they found on the banks of the river four bald, red, white-headed cows. Ciaran of Cluain said, 'Do you see how God hath given us the four cows which the king demanded.' And they then separated, after giving thanks and praise to God, and blessing and kissing each other as a token of grace and peace. And Ciaran came to Saighir, and the other Ciaran went to Clonmacnoise, and sent the cows to the king, who was astonished how such cattle could be found; and on Ciaran making good his promise the cows disappeared, and no tidings of them could be obtained. And the king saw that he had dealt unjustly with Ciaran."

This anecdote appears to have been specially designed by the writer to afford an opportunity for the meeting of the four saints at Saighir when they established this "covenant among themselves and their Coarbhs after them." The nature or object of this compact is not recorded; it was, no doubt, well known in the time of the writer, and was probably often violated or set aside in the feuds of the age. The fact appears to be that Ciaran of Cluain and the Brendans did enter into some compact with the Coarbh of Saighir in their time; and our author, to invest this compact with more authority and importance, introduces St. Ciaran himself as a party to its establishment. But he could not meet the other three saints earlier than about the year 525, at which date he would be himself 150 years of age, which conclusively disproves his personal participation in the enactment of this "covenant."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PASCHAL FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED AND MIRACULOUSLY REKINDLED—
ANTIQUITY OF THE PASCHAL FIRE IN IRELAND.

“There was in the monastery of Clonmacnoise a young boy whose name was Cuthid, who was reluctant and lazy in performing good works, and ready in doing evil works. And he came to Saighir-Ciaran, and remained there some time with Ciaran senior. And Ciaran commanded that the holy fire which he had blessed the previous Easter should not be quenched for a full year, but kept lit in the monastery. But the child of whom we have spoken, instigated by the devil, came of his own accord and put out the fire. And Ciaran said to the people, ‘Are you aware that the wicked child, whose name is Cuthid of Cluain, extinguished the blessed fire we had lit, and he will be avenged for it, for he shall die to-morrow;’ and this turned out true, as he was torn by wolves on the following day on the lands outside the place. And Ciaran said, ‘There shall be no fire in this church till Easter unless God send it.’”

“Ciaran of Cluain-mac-Noise, heard of the child’s death, and he came in all haste to Saighir, and he was received with great honour there. But there was no fire in the monastery, and it was by this holy fire that the fire of the monastery was every night lit. And Ciaran said that there should be no fire [in the church] till Easter, if God did not send it from heaven. And there came on that day to the town (baili) Ciaran of Cluain, and his followers, and they were very cold, for it was snowy weather. And Ciaran senior went out and lifted up his hands in prayer to the Almighty, and a flash of lightning fell into his bosom, and the corner of his mantle became ignited, and he brought it to the house where the guests were, and when they got warm supper was prepared, and when they sat down to partake of it Ciaran of Cluain said that he would not eat food until the child would be restored to life again. Ciaran senior then said, ‘We know this to be your wish, and God will restore him to life again for your sake.’ And the child did recover at the word of Ciaran; and as they saw this they thanked and praised God for his mercies and took their supper. And Ciaran of Cluain took the child with him to Cluain-mac-Noise after he had been blessed by Ciaran senior.”

There has been much speculation indulged in respecting the origin and use of the ecclesiastical fire in ancient Ireland. The sacred fire which was kept perpetually burning in the church of Kildare has been dogmatically asserted to have been a remnant of Irish paganism; and the “blessed fire” preserved in the church of Saighir was, we are

told by another writer, kept burning according to the practice of the Oriental or Greek church.¹ But the same allegation would be equally true of the Western or Latin Church all over Europe at the present day, for the well-known ceremonial of "The Blessing of the Fire" at Easter is but the continuation of the ancient discipline. This ceremony is now performed in the porch or entrance to the church on Easter Eve, when tinder is ignited by fire struck from a flint. From this charcoal is then kindled, and from this the lamps of the church are ultimately lighted, and are supposed to remain unextinguished until the "Maundy-Thursday" of the following Lent. The sacred fires of the ancient Irish church were but the predecessors of the ecclesiastical lamps of succeeding ages. The same sentiment which in our time daily trims and feeds with oil the lamp of the sanctuary then tended and fanned into flame the sacred embers as they smouldered before the holy place in which reposed the relics of the saints or the treasure of the Eucharist. The words attributed to St. Ciaran in the legend, "We shall have no fire in the church till Easter unless God send it," clearly imply that, like the present ecclesiastical practice, the sacred fire was annually extinguished, to be newly enkindled at the Easter solemnity. It is highly interesting to find "The Blessing of the Fire" forming part of the Paschal ceremonies at that remote period in Ireland.

The next anecdote in the legend furnishes another instance of the singular reverence entertained in ancient Ireland for the Paschal Fire. We shall here transcribe it without interruption :

"At another time a brother, or one of Ciaran's monks, whose name was Baton, accidentally extinguished the fire ; but he did penance and received absolution. And on that day St. Ruadhan of Lathrach came on a visit to Ciaran, and there was no fire before him in the monastery ; and Ciaran went to a rock that was near at hand, and he blessed it, and the rock lit up at once ; and Ciaran took the rock in his hands and brought it in lit to the house where the visitors were, and as Ruadhan saw this they glorified and praised God and Ciaran."

Whether these two stories have any foundation in fact or otherwise, the moral of them is obviously to excite devout and reverential awe for the Paschal fire, which had been then kept burning in the church of the monastery from one Easter to another. These miracles

¹ "Greek Church." See "History, Antiquities, and Architecture of the Cathedral Church of St. Canice," by Rev. James Graves," p. 6.

are thus beautifully commemorated in the Martyrology of Donegal at the 5th of March.

“Countless were the signs and wonders which God performed on earth through him [*i.e.* Ciaran]. It was he who used to order the stones to kindle with a puff of his breath. It was he also that made fish, honey, and oil out of the little bit of meat in the time of the fast, when Brenainn of Birr, and Ciaran of Cluain, came on a visit to him, together with many other miracles. He used to be [immersed] in a vat of cold water for the love of the Lord whom he loved. It was he that used to go to the sea-rock that was far distant in the sea (where his nurse, *i.e.* Coca was), without ship or boat, and used to return again, as appears from his own life, chap. 19. Sixty years and three hundred was his age when he resigned his spirit. Ciaran dedicated his congregation to God and to Cartach.”

The following is the conclusion of the last anecdote:—

“The brother we have just mentioned, that is Batan, on another occasion spilled a vessel of milk which he was bringing about; but Ciaran made the sign of the cross on the vessel and it became full again, and the brother who spilled it, *i.e.* Batan, and the rest of the brethren became alarmed or got afraid of their master, Ciaran, and they became firm in the faith, and performed good works ever after.”

It is not difficult to recognise in the respective subjects of the interesting narratives just now reviewed, an effort on the part of our author to prolong the life of St. Ciaran, by introducing the saints of the sixth century as his contemporaries and active *collaborateurs* in the work of the mission. Those anecdotes are abruptly introduced into the Life of our saint at a stage when his earthly career is fast drawing to a close. They are inserted next after the return of Cartach to Saighir, when Ciaran had attained his eighty-seventh year in this world, and they immediately precede the solemn narrative of his death, with neither of which events do they hold the remotest apparent connection; whence, as also from the intrinsic style and matter of those narratives themselves, it would appear that they originally formed part of some legend of St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, which our author appropriated and suited to his biography of the elder Ciaran, and are, in consequence, interpolated into his Life, and furnish no proof whatever that he and anyone of the saints of the sixth century had been contemporaries.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ST. CIARAN'S THREE PETITIONS—HIS DEATH—ITS LOCALITY—
ITS DATE.

"Ciaran was on a certain day praying to the Lord, and an angel appeared unto him and said that the hour of his death was at hand, and he asked three requests of God through the angel, and the angel granted him what he wished. The first was that everyone who was buried in his church and cathedral the gates of hell¹ should be closed against him at the day of judgment. The second request was, that whosoever should keep holy his own [*i.e.* Ciaran's] day would not want the riches of this world, nor the kingdom of heaven after death. The third request was, that the tribe to which he belonged, *i.e.* the Ossorians, and to whom he was patron, should never be vanquished in battle by a stronger tribe if they came unjustly to invade their territory; but that they [*i.e.* the Ossorians] were not to make unjust incursions amongst other tribes."

The first of these three petitions is a request in favour of the church of Saighir, the second is a prayer in favour of the saint himself, and the third is a conditional request in favour of the people of Ossory. The story of those three petitions, like the anecdotes which immediately preceded it, "smell strongly of later times" than the date of St. Ciaran's death, and were, no doubt, suggested by Bishop Cormac, the "scribe of Saighir," first, to preserve the immunities of sepulture with which the cemetery of Saighir had been privileged; secondly, to encourage a becoming reverence for the memory of St. Ciaran by a religious observance of his festival day; and thirdly, to remind the Ossorians, who were then probably troublesome neighbours, that they were not to calculate on St. Ciaran's interposition in their favour if they themselves make unjust inroads on their neighbour's estates. Thus to the end of the Legend the "scribe of Saighir" attends to the interests of his house.

"This holy man of whom we have spoken, viz., Ciaran of Saighir,

¹ "Gates of Hell." The 11th Canon of the Synod held in Christ's Church, Dublin, in A.D. 1186, prohibits, under pain of anathema, any person to bury in a churchyard that had not been consecrated by a bishop; upon which Canon Dr. Lanigan thus comments: "The reason, or at least one of them, for passing this decree, was probably to check the impertinence—for I cannot call it by a better name—of certain monks who pretended that extraordinary, and, indeed, monstrous privileges, were attached to burials in their cemeteries, or within their precincts, and that the persons there interred received wonderful advantages from that circumstance. Instances of such pretended and absurd prerogatives may be seen in the Life of St. Maedoc of Ferns, and in the Life of St. Ciaran of Saighir." Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv., p. 273.

great was his humility in all things, and he delighted in reading and hearing the holy scriptures read; and he read and studied them to the hour of his death. It is said of him that in his lifetime he and the other Irish saints were educated by Finian¹ of Cluain-Iraird [Clonard], and that he learned wisdom and divinity unsurpassable in that school, and that he was named the *daltha* [the fosterer or favourite] of St. Finian, as were also the other Irish saints called, and being then in his old age possessed of great wisdom and learning, and as a revered bishop his anxiety was chiefly to instruct others by teaching love, obedience, and wisdom."

"Ciaran from his youth until his death never tasted strong drink, nor did he wear warm or fine clothing, nor did he indulge in feasts, or sleep much."

"He converted his own tribe, viz., the Ossorians, to the Christian faith, and many more beside them; and he was often visited by angels and a large number of bishops and priests and the other orders of the church, and an angel built a holy well for him, in which many diseases and infirmities are cured by its water, and its name is Ciaran's well."

"Thirty years Ciaran spent in the service of God before he was baptized, and on getting infirm by old age and sickness, he saw the hour of death approaching, and he collected his flock and parishioners from all quarters around him, and he blessed them and exhorted them to keep holy the commandments of God; and he then received the holy sacrament in presence of a choir of holy men, on the 3rd of the nones of the month of March, in peace with God; and he dismissed his people, and there were thirty bishops, who were consecrated by his own hands, with God's permission, accompanying him that very night to heaven."

This quotation comprises the four last paragraphs in the Legend of St. Ciaran's biography. The two first are sketches of his manner of life, his piety, humility, abstemiousness, and mortified habits from his youth to his death. The third contains an indirect reference to the place to which he retired before his death. Yet, without giving its name, the last paragraph is a description of the manner of his death and departure out of this world.

It must be granted that our author's sketch of the closing scene in St. Ciaran's life is but a meagre outline of so important an event;

¹ "Educated by Finian." The school of St. Finian of Clonard, was not opened till A.D. 544. St. Ciaran was eighty years old in A.D. 455, when St. Patrick visited him at Saighir; hence, he should be one hundred and sixty-nine years old at the opening of Finian's school. It is not then surprising that our author should say of him that "he was then in his old age, &c." See above pp. 37, 152, et seq.

yet, it is sufficiently explicit to disprove the assertion, so often advanced, that Ciaran in his old age retired to Cornwall,¹ where he departed this life, and was made to repose beneath the church of "*Perranzabuloe*." But are we to believe on no authority that this venerable old man, who confined his mission during a life-long career to his own tribe and territory, would now, with all his domestic and missionary attachments, and in nearly the ninetieth year of his age, forsake the scenes of his life and the fruits of his labours for a foreign land, with which he had no connection, and there erect a stone church at a period when neither the use of the arch or of lime cement had been known in Ireland?

The author of the legend appears through special design to have left unnamed the locality of St. Ciaran's death. Had he departed this life in Saighir, or had that church been enriched with the treasure of his relics, so important an event would not fail to have been recorded in its favour. That he did die there dare not be affirmed, as it would be positively untrue. That the rival church of Ossory possessed that privilege could not have been granted, as it would detract from the prestige claimed by the author for his own church at Saighir; and thus both the name and locality of the church which was last honoured by the presence of St. Ciaran in this world, are designedly ignored by his biographer. But in the paragraph already referred to, the author implies that the death of the saint occurred elsewhere than at Saighir, and as this passage will help to guide us to the locality of the final scene of his illustrious career, we shall, even at the risk of being tedious, here again transcribe it:—

"He [Ciaran] converted his own tribe, viz., the Ossorians, to the Christian faith, and many more besides them; and he was often visited by angels, and by a large number of bishops and priests, and other orders of the church. *And an angel built a holy well for him, in which many diseases and infirmities are cured by its water, and its name is Ciaran's well.*"

This passage alleges first, that St. Ciaran converted his own tribe, the Ossorians, and many others to the Christian faith. The object of introducing this point at this stage of his life was apparently to show why he retired to his own tribe before his death; secondly, in the place to which he retired he was honoured by the

¹ "Cornwall," so stated, amongst others, by Alban Butler at the 5th of March.

conversation of angels, and was visited by bishops, priests, &c., from other churches; and thirdly, in this place to which he retired an angel built a holy well for him, and the name of that well is "Ciaran's well," and its waters are celebrated for their curative efficacy.

If St. Ciaran resided at Saighir till the period of his death an angel would not be required to build a well for his use, as he had there "his own well," the fountain "Saighir," which he had blessed and changed into wine only a few years previously. Hence it is clear that St. Ciaran had retired from that well before his death, and in the place to which he retired a new fountain gushes forth through the agency of an angel; and our author significantly adds, the name of that fountain is "Ciaran's well," and apparently so named by him in contradistinction to the more celebrated fountain of "Saighir." Where, then, did the angel build this well? If we can discover its locality we shall have arrived at the place whence our saint had departed for heaven. The only well bearing the name of St. Ciaran that we read of (except his well at Saighir) was situated in the immediate vicinity of the King of Ossory's mansion-place, where Ciaran had spent the morning of his life, and where he would naturally seek for repose in his declining years. It is recorded in the "White Book of Ossory"¹ that Hugh Rufus, the first English bishop of that see, granted by charter to the Earl Mareschal, the land extending from "Cotteral's-bridge, over the Bregach river, to St. Kenerock's (*i.e.* St. Ciaran's) well;" and on the land thus obtained the Earl erected the Franciscan Abbey, and endowed it with the ground received from the bishop. At the suppression of the religious houses, in the reign of Henry VIII., St. Francis' Abbey and its lands became vested in the Corporation of Kilkenny. In a Corporate rental² of A.D. 1688, William Jackson is entered as tenant for "a waste in St. Kieran's well," and we find at the present day that the boundary of the property which reverted to the Corporation from the Franciscan Abbey, is formed by the stream of water which runs to the river from the well in the yard of the aristocratic and ancient mansion in King-street, now in the occupation of Mr. James Gregory, which enables us to identify that very beautiful and copious spring as the St. Kenerock's well of six hundred and fifty years ago,

¹ "White Book of Ossory," as quoted by Rev. James Graves in *History, Antiquities, and Architecture, Cathedral Church of St. Canice*, p. 31, n. 6.

² "Rental." One of the Laffan papers published by Ledwich. "*History of Irishtown and Kilkenny*," p. 439.

and, apparently, the well said to have been built by the angel for St. Ciaran's use. There was also a church of St. Ciaran near this well, for in Bishop Otway's "Visitation Book,"¹ compiled about the middle of the seventeenth century, mention is made to, as being still standing, "the old chapel near Kyrock's well." This well was also celebrated for its miraculous efficacy. Ledwich, who wrote towards the end of the last century, thus observes, sarcastically, respecting a spring of water in this neighbourhood:—"It was famous heretofore for its miraculous cures, and still preserves some degree of credit."² This, then, was the well built by an angel, in which many diseases and infirmities are cured, "and its name is Ciaran's well." To the neighbourhood of this well the saint retired, after having resigned the government of his church and community to Cartach. Here, on the brink of this crystal fountain, and amidst the refreshing scenes of his boyhood, this venerable bishop invested his own tribesmen in their baptismal robes, so that from the abundance of the blessings imparted through the medium of its waters future generations would hold it in such reverence as to have it built by an angel, and its waters to be imbued with healing virtues.

It has been already stated that the palace of the kings of Ossory stood on the site of the present Castle of Kilkenny, and in the immediate vicinity of the well which had been built by the angel for St. Ciaran's use. The regulus who occupied that mansion at the period of the saint's retirement from Saighir was Concruidhe, a maternal relative of Ciaran's, and the same faithful convert who had recourse to him for counsel when solicited to commit sin by Eithne Vathach at the banquet, and of whom see above p. 148. It was to the hospitable home of this prince that St. Ciaran retired in

¹ "Visitation Book," quoted by the Rev. James Graves. "History, &c., Cathedral Church of St. Canice," p. 31.

² "Credit." "Ledwich's Antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny." The writer applies those observations to what he calls St. Francis' well, a fine spring, or rather pond of water, near the Franciscan Abbey, which has been generally used for bathing purposes during the summer season. I have been informed by some of the oldest natives of Kilkenny that this spring or pond had never been regarded as a "holy well," nor is it referred to as such except by Ledwich. But St. Ciaran's well, in the same piece of ground, and which was to form its southern boundary, must have been held in veneration from the time of the saint himself, especially as down to so late a date his "old chapple" was standing on its brink, but this chapel having been demolished and the well enclosed within private premises, the traditions of its ancient fame were transferred to another well in the abbey grounds by Ledwich, who knew almost nothing of either the topography or the ecclesiology of Kilkenny.

his old age, and here in the bosom of his own tribe he saw, with composure, the hour of his death approaching. Here he was visited by angels, bishops, priests, and other ecclesiastics, and having collected his *muntuir*, i.e. his tribe or parishioners, around him, bestowed on them his final benediction, and then, attended by thirty bishops, who had received episcopal consecration at his hands, he calmly resigned his spirit on the 5th day of the month of March.

When St. Ciaran resigned the government of his church at Saighir, in the year 462, he had attained the eighty-seventh year of his age. But few years, indeed, could have intervened between that event and the date of his death; yet, it appears that life was spared him for some further period, as our author tells us that it was now the angel built him the holy well, at which he was frequently visited by bishops, priests, and other ecclesiastics. If we allow him a prolongation of his life for three years from the date of his retirement he would attain the ninetieth year of his age, and depart this life in A.D. 465. According to the Annals of Innisfallen¹ St. Patrick died on the 16th of

¹ "Annals of Innisfallen." "The date of St. Patrick's death," writes Lanigan, "is clearly laid down in a copy of the Annals of Innisfallen. This copy assigns the death of St. Patrick to the 432nd year after the passion of our Lord—a date which exactly corresponds to A.D. 465, according to the system of Bede and others, who have affixed the passion to the year 33 of the Christian era." He gives this extract in a foot note "Quies Patricii, 16 Kal Aprilis Anno 432nd a passione Domini." See Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, Vol. I., p. 361 and seq.

In the Book of Armagh, as quoted both by Dr. Todd and the now Most Rev. Dr. Moran: "From the passion of Christ to the death of Patrick are in all ccccxxxvi years." According to this authority our Apostle would have ended his earthly career in A.D. 469, four years after the date assigned for it in the Annals of Innisfallen. Dr. Keating quotes a *ran* from an "ancient poet of good authority" to show that "for one-and-sixty years" Patrick preached to the Irish. The Most Rev. Dr. Moran quotes and illustrates the Chronicle of Marianus Scotus to show against Dr. Lanigan's views that our Apostle preached not forty but sixty years in Ireland, and quotes the following from the very high authority of Fiach's hymn:—

"He [Patrick] preached for three-score years
The crucifixion of Christ, to the tribes of the Fein."

("Early Irish Church," p. 56, et seq), from all which it has been argued that as the preaching of our Apostle commenced in A.D. 432, and as it lasted for sixty years, it must have terminated in 492-3, which year has been accordingly fixed on for that of his death. But we are to understand this statement about the "sixty years" in the same light as all our Hagiologists understand Eric of Auxerre in his Life of St. Germanus, where he says—"Patrick was the Chief Apostle of Ireland, and spent *fourteen years* under the most holy tutorship of Germanus." Our Apostle could not spend fourteen years under the tutorship of the Bishop of Auxerre, as he had been seven out of the fourteen in the island of Lerins. But the writer intended the fourteen years to count from A.D. 418, when Patrick first placed himself under the guidance of that bishop to the year

the calends of April, in the year 432 from the passion of our Lord, which is precisely equivalent to A.D. 465, the same year as we have just arrived at as the date of St. Ciaran's death, which presents us with the most interesting coincidence yet noted in the missionary relationship between the two saints. As we advanced through the several stages of this inquiry, we have been frequently excited to admire the marvellous way in which Providence had so often interwoven the salient epochs in the life of our saint with those in that of the Irish apostle ; and here we find the same Providence which through life rendered the principal actions of each common to both, now preserving a similar coincidence in their mutual departures from this world in the same month of the one year. Ciaran yielded up his spirit in his ninetieth year on the 5th of March, and Patrick his soul in his seventy-sixth year on the 17th day of the same month. According to the "old Life" of St. Ciaran "King Aengus and his Queen fell in the battle of Cill Osnaigh on the 8th of the Ides of October, and St. Patrick died in the same year."¹ Thus the three great men, Aengus, the first Christian King of Munster, Patrick, the Apostle of

432, when he departed from him on his mission to Ireland, and in the same way our most ancient writers understood his having "preached sixty years to the Irish." In it they include the period of his captivity, which commenced in A.D. 405, sixty years from which brings us to the year 465 as the date of his death, precisely the same to which the Annals of Innisfallen assign for the departure of our illustrious Apostle for Heaven. Dr. Todd accepts of 493 as the date of our Apostle's death, and for the very clear reason, which he does not attempt to conceal, that it enables him to disprove with more felicity, the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland so early as A.D. 432. But the almost concurrent testimony of ancient and modern writers place the opening of St. Patrick's mission in A.D. 432, with which it must be conceded it is not easy to reconcile his departure out of this life in 493, as he should in that case have attained 104 years at the time of his death. This, however, is possible but not probable. The authorities now quoted, and the conclusion thence arrived at, are advanced with due deference and respect for the high authorities who hold the contrary views ; but as the subject is freely discussed from various standpoints, and by writers of several shades of religious opinion, readers who desire to see the various dates assigned by the many different writers for the death of the Irish Apostle fully investigated, may consult Dr. Lanigan's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., chap. VII. ; Dr. Todd's "St. Patrick," chap. III., p. 494 et seq. ; and the Most Rev. Dr. Moran's "Early Irish Church," p. 99, et seq.

1 "And St. Patrick died in the same year." The sixty years that our Apostle is said to have "preached to the Irish" being erroneously made to commence in A.D. 432, the date of the opening of his mission, instead of in 465, the date of his first journey to Ireland, has deranged the entire chronology in both the civil and ecclesiastical history of Ireland for the last half of the fifth century, as every event connected with or depending on the departure of our saint has been thrown forward and forced to harmonize with it in time, thus making the Apostle's death succeed matters which should necessarily succeed it. Dr. Lanigan argues the case thus : "The Tripartite, after relating how Benignus, when a boy, became a pupil of the saint, introduces the latter, saying, "*He will be the heir of my power ; that is, he will be after me the supreme moderator of*

Erin, and Ciaran, the "first-born of the saints of Ireland," took their departure for heaven in this same year of our Lord, 465.

Of course the conclusion just arrived at is entirely dependent on the case of Ciaran having survived by three years the return of Cartach to Saighir. That he did survive that event for some time we have seen good reason for concluding; that he lived for a longer period than three years is improbable, as he was then ninety years old; but our saint may have lived but one or two years after the return of Cartach, in any one of which cases we have traced his departure out of this world to within one or two years—if not to the actual year—in which St. Patrick and King Aengus closed respectively their earthly careers.

the Irish Church." Then it adds, "And that prophesy was proved by the event; for he became afterwards so distinguished by his learning and miracles that in the opinion of all persons he was judged worthy of *succeeding* his master (St. Patrick) in the Archbishopric of Armagh and Primacy of Ireland." "Here we find," adds Lanigan, "Benignus called the *heir* of St. Patrick, and the saint foretelling his appointment, not appointing him, and the opinion or judgment of others mentioned as the immediate cause of his promotion." Now, St. Benean, or Benignus, died, according to the Four Masters, in A.D. 467; and yet, in the same annals, we have the death of our Apostle recorded at A.D. 493—twenty-three years after the death of his successor in the same Church. In the same way, and by the same rule as Aengus Mac Nadhfrach fell in the same year in which St. Patrick died, it was necessary to throw forward the battle of Killosnadh, in which he was slain, to accommodate it in point of time with the date of St. Patrick's death; but if that event occurred in A.D. 493, it is absolutely impossible, in the ordinary course of nature, that Aengus MacNadhfrach could be then alive. In his pedigree quoted above, page 11, he descends in the fifth degree from Lughaidh MacConn. Lughaidh was slain in the year 253, five descents from which, at 30 years to each, make 150 years, which, being added to 253, bring us to Aengus MacNadhfrach as a full-grown man in the year 400, with which it is impossible to reconcile A.D. 493 as the date of his death in battle; and a very important piece of evidence in support of this conclusion is supplied by the fact that the battle of Killosnadh is recorded in one of the poems of Dubhtach Mac Ui Lugair. This personage was Olmadh, or Chief Druid to King Leoghaire MacNeill, and was converted to the Christian faith by St. Patrick on the occasion of his first visit to Tara in the year 433. Now, to be an Olmadh, or doctor of laws to the chief monarch of the nation, would require a man to be venerable in both years and aspect, and for these qualifications fifty years of age would be necessarily required; and if Dubhtach (Duffy) had attained that age in 433, the date of his conversion, he would be 110 years in 493, the date assigned for the battle of Killosnadh, at which period of life—even if he had attained it—it is preposterous to suppose he would be capable of indicting his historical *rans*. But as the battle of Killosnadh was fought in the same year in which St. Patrick died, and as, according to the authorities quoted in the preceding note that event occurred in the year 465, Dubhtach, who records it, would be then about eighty years old. Hence it could not have taken place so late as 493—twenty-eight years after, as he would be then about a hundred and ten years. But as the "Old Life of St. Ciaran" tells us this battle was fought in the same year in which St. Patrick died, we can safely conclude that this great engagement between the Mummonian and Lagenian forces was fought at Kellistown, in the now county of Carlow, in the year 465. For the poems of Dubhtach Mac Ui Lugair we are indebted to the Rev. J. F. Shearman, who first gave them to us, with translation and notes, in the "Journal of the Royal Historical and Archæological Society," Vol. III., fourth series, pp. 24-183.

ST. CIARAN OF OSSORY :

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

PART THIRD.

MEMORIALS OF ST. CIARAN.

CHAPTER I.

TULLAHERIN, THE TULACH OR TUMULUS OF CIARAN.

That the mounds of earth, named Tulach, so numerous over the face of the country, were tumuli or sepulchral memorials, is very clearly established by the following passage from the Book of Rights, pp. 36-37 :—

The King of Munster, on the occasion of his royal excursion through the island, having passed through Connaught and Tir-Conail, and paid his respects to the kings of those territories, next entered the province of Tir-Eoghan, and the bard thus records his munificence to its territorial chief :—

“Thirty drinking horns and thirty swords,
Thirty red steeds [fit] for the road,
To the man who has the *green tumulus*,
To the chief of the *green Tulach-og*.”

Here the verdant mound of Tullaghoge, on which the O’Neills were used to be crowned, is denominated “the green tumulus,” which conclusively proves that the compiler of the “Book of Rights” understood the Irish word *Tulach* as substantially identical with the Latin word *tumulus*.

The reservation naturally peculiar to St. Ciaran’s character,

which influenced him to avoid the display and pomp of public life, and which confined him almost exclusively during his missionary career within the limits of his own territory and monastery, induced him, in his declining years, to retire from his community in order to end his earthly journey in seclusion, and apparently unknown to all save his own relatives and tribesmen, from which circumstance various writers have arrived at very different conclusions respecting the place and time of his demise. We have seen above, p. 163, n. 1, that St. Odhran retired from the cares of his monastery to a secluded valley, where, having closed his earthly journey unknown to his disciples, his biographer assumed that he had ascended into heaven; and in centuries later we find his name associated with his tumulus under the title of *Tulach-Odhran*, anglicised Tullaroan. In a similar manner Ciaran appears to have retired from public life on the return of Cartach from his pilgrimage, when he committed the care of his community to his favourite disciple, and, unknown to his disciples, took his departure out of life, whence some held him to be still living three hundred years after his death. Others said he retired to Wales, where he founded the several churches that there still retain his name. Colgan says that Saighir is nowhere mentioned as the place of his death;¹ and the author of the Egerton MS., quoted by Right Rev. Dr. Moran,² says that he directed his disciples before his death to bury him in a secret place unknown to all but themselves.

Ciaran was most probably, if not most certainly, the first bishop that had been buried in the territory of Ossory. That many of his clansmen had been advanced to Holy Orders, and some of them even to the episcopacy, is certain; but those primitive ecclesiastics being strongly wedded to ancient national customs, and having no idea of the solemn ceremonial with which the church on the Continent then honoured the mortal remains of its bishops after death, and equally ignorant of the stately mausoleums of Greece and Rome, they paid to the remains of their first bishop such respect as their national usages taught—they laid him to repose according to the ritual of his fathers; and raised over his grave such memorial as had been erected to the memory of the most

¹ "Place of his death." See the several views entertained on this point by various writers in Dr. Lanigan's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. II. p. 9, and notes 29, 30.

² "Dr. Moran." See "Inaugural Address," p. 6.

distinguished personages amongst his ancestors. If they inscribed an Ogham on his grave it has never since been deciphered, nor does any scroll exist to record the place of his sepulchre. But monumental history often supplies evidence where written testimony is silent. The great ancestor of Ciaran, Leoghaire Birn, from whom his tribe received the name of "The Dal Birn of Ossory," had his memorial heap erected, and under the name of Tulach-Birn, perpetuates his memory to the present day. Ruman-Duach, the grandfather of Ciaran, and the most illustrious of his ancestors, had also built over his grave his monumental pile, *i.e.* Tulach Odagh, the site of which is still associated with his name. St. Ciaran was a prince of the same blood, and his burial was after the manner of his ancestors. Over his grave his tribesmen piled up his memorial heap, which, slightly modified in name, comes down to us under the anglicised form of Tullaherin.

In anglicising Irish compound words the initial letter of the second member of the combination is often, if not generally, eclipsed or crushed out of sound in the pronunciation, as in Eilie O'Fogarty, which is anglicised Eliogarty. In Cill Dalua the D is aspirated, and the word is pronounced Killaloe. In Cill Finnchi, or the church of St. Finnchi (of whom see p. 183 above) the F in the saint's name retains its full sound so long as it remains an independent word, but by some law in the Irish language, when it becomes amalgamated with the prefix Cill, thus "Cillfinnchi," the f becomes mute, the h modifies the c at the end of the word, and both the orthography and pronunciation then become Killiney, the name of the well-known townland near Kells, in this county. Lastly, in the word Tulach Odhran, the h mortifies the c in Tulach and the d in Odhran, and the initial o in the latter word being rendered mute by the law already noticed, Tulach Odhran becomes Tullaroan.¹ In the word Ciaran the C is sounded sharp, like the English K, but when the name becomes united to a prefix the C in some cases becomes mute, as in the following passage from the *Annals of the Four Masters* at A.D. 1163 :

"*Maelchiarain*, Chief Senior of the men of Meath—died."

In this word *Maelchiarain*, the c is punctuated, and the h is introduced into the translation, which mortifies the c, leaving the

¹ "Tullaroan." Ballyroan, a townland and parish in the Queen's County, comes from *Baile-Odhran*, *i.e.* Odhranstown. This Odhran or Oran was a chieftain of Luoighis or Leix, in the tenth century. See *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 931.

pronunciation Maelhiarin; and we have it on the high authority of Dr. O'Donovan¹ that the Irish name "Maelchiaran" is now pronounced Mulherin, and in the same way and by a similar law *Tulach-cirain*, being thus punctuated, the c in Tulach becomes mute by the introduction of the h, and the c in Chiaran being crushed out of sound by the h also, or rendered mute by its union with its prefix Tulach, as found operating in the cases above, Tulach Chiarain becomes Tullaherin, the name of one of the most interesting ecclesiastical foundations in the diocese of Ossory.

Tullaherin gives name to a parish and townland in the barony of Gowran, seven Irish miles from Kilkenny. Of this ancient foundation no memorial exists, save what, in addition to the beautiful cluster of its ruins, is implied in the etymology of its name, viz., the tulach or tumulus of Ciaran. The church and round tower stand on a gentle eminence in a swampy field, and nearly central in the townland and parish of the same name. Like most of our early ecclesiastical establishments nothing is known of the history of this once important institution. There can, however, be scarcely a doubt that from the day on which St. Ciaran was laid to repose beneath this mound his name and memory were venerated here, and that from this sentiment his clients erected on this *tulach*, consecrated by the presence of his relics, the beautiful group of ecclesiastical buildings, the remains of which, now sobered down by age, are so highly picturesque in aspect when observed from any stand-point in the surrounding country. The "Patron" of St. Ciaran had been annually observed here on the Sunday next following the 5th of March from the suppression of the church to about thirty years since.

The use of the tulach or sepulchral mound being of Pagan origin, was generally discontinued after the establishment of Christian cemeteries in Ireland, and hence the word, when found in combination with the names of our saints, is found only so with the names of such as died in the earliest days of Christianity in Ireland. St. Ciaran was the morning star that ushered in the dawn of that auspicious day, and having taken his departure from the midst of his tribe ere its sun had

¹ "O'Donovan." See "Life and Times of Cathal Crobhderg," with translation, by John O'Daly, and notes by John O'Donovan. "Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-east of Ireland Archæological Society," 1853, p. 340, n. 5.

risen above the horizon, his kinsmen piled over his mortal remains the *tulach* of ancient usage, which, becoming locally associated with his name, has come down to us the uninscribed memorial of his last resting place on earth. There, over it, still stands an Ogham stone¹ of pre-historic times. Could we decipher its *scoria* we would probably have the record of Ciaran's repose. There, too, stands one of our mysterious round towers, draped in the mystic associations of ancient Ireland. There, too, stand the remains of an ancient Irish church, its walls now fast crumbling to ruin, yet, in the subdued grandeur of decay, shedding an air of solemn romance on the scene. There, too, have come from time immemorial, with the annual return of St. Ciaran's day, the faithful Celtic pilgrim crowd to implore at his grave the prayers of the "*Primogenitus sanctorum Hiberniæ*."

¹ "Ogham Stone." See an engraving of this Ogham, with detailed description of its outlines, situation, &c, by the late Mr. J. G. A. Prim. Also an engraving of same monument, with an attempt to read and translate its inscription by Mr. W. Williams, of Dungarvan. Transactions of Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archæological Society, New Series, A.D. 1854, p. 86, id. 1856-7, p. 330. As to Mr. Williams's reading and translation of the *Scoria* I am not qualified, and, therefore, will not presume to offer an opinion on the subject; but the page referred to for Mr. Williams's paper will go far to convince an enquirer that Mr. Williams himself is not over sanguine on the point.

CHAPTER II.

SEIRKIERAN—ITS AFFLUENCE, DISCIPLINE, AND DECADENCE.

Saighir Ciaran, or, as it is now anglicised, Seirkieran, is situated in the barony of Ballybrit, four Irish miles east of Birr, and not far from the south-western extremity of the Slieve-Bloom mountains, King's County. It gives name to a parish which, though insulated by the diocese of Killaloe, is yet under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ossory. The church of Saighir was the principal foundation, and has been the most illustrious memorial of the life and mission of St. Ciaran; and was at one period not inferior in either the number of its community or the extent of its possessions to most of the monastic institutions of its age in Ireland. This church attained the culminating point in its history towards the middle of the ninth century, when the biography of St. Ciaran was being compiled. So rich was this house at that time in the good things of this world that the writer of the Life found it necessary, in extenuation of its mundane aspect, to attribute its wealth to the blessing which St. Ciaran, of Clonmacnoise, pronounced upon Saighir when, on taking his leave of St. Ciaran Senior, he thus bade him farewell: "Let the result of my blessing be riches and much treasure and wealth in your town for ever."¹

Rich, indeed, Saighir then was in worldly affluence. The "Barcon Ciaran" had then attained the zenith of its reputation, being universally honoured throughout Ireland, as it was borne in solemn procession, to be sworn on by princes to keep fealty with each other, to sound the excommunication of delinquents for perjury and treason, to defend the poor from oppression, and to sanction the collection of the revenues due to the monastery.² Exceptionally favoured was Saighir also at that time in the sepulchral immunities of its Cathedral, which, in consequence of the promise of the angel to have the gates of hell closed at the judgment day against the admission of whomsoever should have been interred within its precincts, became the burial place of the most distinguished personages in the nation. In A.D. 974 Donnchadh, King of Ossory, was there laid to repose with the most solemn pomp and

¹ "For ever." See above p. 160.

² "Monastery." See above chapter III., p. 15, *et seq.*

grandeur.¹ Rich also was Saighir then in landed possessions, for, besides the "monastery, rents, and the emoluments arising from interments" conferred on St. Ciaran by Dima, Chief of the Dal Fiachra, the community were also in possession of the lands called *Rath-finntuoin*, and *Leim-Eitile* (see pp. 120-147), which appear to have been farms contiguous to the monastery. Rich also was Saighir in its flocks of sheep and herds of swine, in milch cows and draft oxen. Fifty horses were daily employed in tillage, and a great *booly*² was attached to the monastery for the rearing of calves, having ten internal compartments or stalls, and as many external approaches. The daily employment of the monks is not specified, but after their religious exercises it must have consisted principally in agricultural and other manual labours. These obscure men were the pioneers of a future civilization. They cleared the plains of wood, and rendered them fit for tillage and pasture; they spanned the rivers with bridges, and cut roads through mountains, forests, and other inaccessible regions. There is still existing in the County of Kilkenny the remains of a great roadway which at one time connected the northern and southern extremities of the ancient Ossory, and which is traditionally said to have been originally constructed by St. Ciaran and his scholars from Saighir. (For an account of this road see below chapter VI.)

Though the church of Saighir enjoyed an abundance of the blessings of life, the community lived in the practice of an austere discipline. In the depth of winter, when the ground was covered with snow, there was no fire in the monastery except the sacred embers of the Paschal Fire, which was kept constantly burning in the church, and from which, towards evening, a fire was kindled in the community room before the monks assembled for supper.³ The use of flesh meat was not interdicted except on fasting days. Those days are not named except as "the time of the fast," which we may understand of Lent, during which flesh was entirely forbidden. Yet it would appear that the abbot enjoyed the privilege of dispensing with the fast on certain

¹ "Grandeur." For an account of his interment, see *History, Antiquities, and Architecture of the Cathedral Church of St. Canice*, p. 8, n. b.

² "Great Booley." See the Scholiast on Aengus, *i.e.* Cathal Maguire at the 5th March, *Acta SS.*, p. 471.

³ "Assembled for supper." This is clearly stated above in p. 170, where it is said, "And it was by this holy fire that the fire of the monastery was every night lit."

occasions.¹ On fasting days, fish, oil, and porridge (which are described as delicacies) were used. Wine was also allowed,² even in fasting times, but was apparently confined to occasions when visitors were residing in the monastery. This monastery was a house of great hospitality, and how parsimonious soever the inmates may have fared themselves, their cellar was stored with wine, and their cellarer was an officer who occupied himself with the entertainment of guests. Aengus, King of Munster, and another king named Oiliole, of Cashel, with their armies, were sumptuously entertained at this monastery.³

The church of Saighir was an asylum for learning and for learned men. The two bishops Cormac,⁴ were abbots of this church, and have been esteemed learned men and distinguished scribes. Aedh Ui Raithnen was also abbot here. He died A.D. 920. He is described as the "old sage of Ireland and wise man of Saighir,"⁵ and the abbot, Cormac Ua Cillane, is denominated "a bishop and a man of great age, and was in universal estimation, as well for his extensive knowledge as his truly exemplary piety."⁶ He died in A.D. 794. This was also a retreat of pious seclusion from the world, where chieftains and warriors sought repose from the fatigues and turbulence of life. In A.D. 961 Fearghal, son of Ceallach, died here after his pilgrimage." The decadence of Saighir dates from the year 842, when it was first sacked and plundered by the Danes. The community, however, soon recovered from the effects of this raid, for we find the succession of its abbots and learned men preserved uninterrupted during the following century. In the year 952 Seirkieran was plundered, its walls levelled to the ground, and its

¹ "Certain occasions." This appears to be the meaning of St. Ciaran commanding his servant to prepare the meat for dinner, as it was the only food to be had in the monastery. I am sure that in many other places than Ireland the heads of great monastic establishments enjoyed the privilege of dispensing with the fast; especially if there was no other food than flesh meat in the house, and that strangers were to be entertained. See above p. 168.

² "Wine was allowed." This would appear to be the case from what we are told above in p. 168, "That by God's grace all the vessels in the house were filled with highly flavoured wines for the saints' dinner."

³ "At this monastery." See accounts given above in pages 151-159. See also Rev. James Graves's "History, Antiquities, and Architecture of St. Canice's Cathedral Church," Section First, on Seirkieran.

⁴ "Cormac." One of those was author of the Legend of St. Ciaran's Life, of whom see above p. 16.

⁵ "Wise man of Saighir." From Four Masters, A.D., 920.

⁶ "Piety." Four Masters, A.D. 794.

monastery burned to ashes by the men of Munster. From the effects of this dilapidation Seirkieran never regained its former strength. Twenty-one years after this assault the cemetery of Saighir was still an open, unprotected common, which so grieved Sabdh, Queen of Donnchadh, then monarch of Ireland, on finding the graves of her ancestors without an enclosure to save them from desecration, that in A.D. 973 she procured workmen out of Meath to enclose the cemetery with a wall, part of which is still in existence there.¹ But, notwithstanding the royal patronage thus bestowed on Seirkieran, the monastery appears from this downwards to have gradually fallen into decay. Yet the succession in its abbots, though probably often interrupted, still preserved through the various vicissitudes of foreign invasions and of internecine strifes an almost unbroken chain of ecclesiastics from its foundation down to the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. In the course of this essay it became, in the interest of truth, an imperative duty to denude this venerable locality of much of its fabled prestige; but now, by way of restitution, we have to record that from this church of Saighir is derived one of the most esteemed prerogatives enjoyed by the church of Ossory at the present day.

Notwithstanding all that has been written to the contrary, there is not a shadow of evidence existing in history to show that the ecclesiastics of Seirkieran at any time exercised or enjoyed jurisdiction over any other church in Ossory, or that any translation of ecclesiastical authority, episcopal or otherwise, from Seirkieran to Aghaboe, ever took place. It is, indeed, true that amongst all the churches of Ossory, in that of Seirkieran the ecclesiastical succession from St. Ciaran was alone preserved. The "Coarbh of Ciaran," in the church of Saighir, was the legal representative and heir-at-law to the temporal possessions, immunities, and privileges of the founder. Donald O'Fogharty was the last "Coarbh of Ciaran"² recorded in the Irish annals. He assisted at the Council of Kells in A.D. 1152. He was there raised to the episcopate of Ossory by the assembled prelates, and he being the legal representative of St. Ciaran, and heir-at-law to the tem-

¹ "Existence there." See above p. 17.

² "Coarbh of Ciaran." He was apparently one of the five "bishops-elect" who, with twenty-two bishops, assisted at that council, where he is designated "Vicar-General, Bishop of Ossory." Keating's History of Ireland—Carson's edition, Book II., p. 104. Ware's Bishops at "Ossory" denominates him "Coarbh of Ciaran," and quotes an "ancient manuscript" as his authority.

poralities of his church, was by that act constituted the connecting link which united together in an unbroken chain the future bishops of Ossory with the ancient successors of St. Ciaran in the church of Saighir, and through them with the saint himself, the founder and patriarch of this the most ancient church in Ireland.

The cemetery of Sierkieran consists of about an acre of ground. Its boundary wall is for the most part extremely ancient, and is believed to retain some portions of the *septam* erected in the tenth century by Sabdh, the queen of King Donnchadh. A small stone-roofed turret still stands in the cemetery which has been set down by a writer in the "Dublin Penny Journal" to have been, in ancient times, the depository of the sacred fire which constantly burned in the monastery, and is still called by the local inhabitants, the "Fire Tower;" but Mr. Graves tells us that this building is comparatively modern, the existence of a tier of shot-holes proving it to have been erected after the introduction of firearms. At a short distance south-east of the church, St. Ciaran's well is shown under an old ash tree. It is not, as far as can be discovered, the source of any stream; nor has it any means of egress, but is apparently stagnant; yet, strange to say, it possesses the most delicious freshness through all seasons of the year. On Bell Hill, in the adjoining townland of the same name, is an old white-thorn called Bell Bush, to which tradition points as occupying the spot where Ciaran's bell found its voice, as related in the Legend. See above, p. 94.

It would be plagiarism on my part to attempt here any further illustration of the present ruin of Seirkieran. All that could be gleaned on that interesting subject by industry and learning has been already given to the reading world by the Rev. James Graves, to whose valuable work on the "History, Antiquities, and Architecture of St. Canice's Cathedral Church," I beg to refer for an account of the antiquities of the ancient city of Seirkieran.

CHAPTER III.

KILL CIARAN AND TRAIGH CIARAN.

Fintract Clere, *i.e.*, the white or fair strand of Cape Clear island, in the south of the county of Cork, is now called *Traigh Ciaran*, and is described as follows in Smith's "Natural and Civil History of Cork," b. 2, c. 4: "A little to the east of the castle [of Dunamore, on the N.W. point of Cape Clear island] is a cove called Traigh Ciaran, *i.e.* St. Ciaran's Strand, on which is a pillar stone, with a cross rudely carved towards the top, that they say was the workmanship of St. Ciaran; and near it stand the walls of a ruined church, dedicated to the same saint. This stone they hold in great veneration, and assemble round it every 5th of March, on which day they celebrate the festival of their Patron."

Fintract Clere was the native tribeland of St. Ciaran's mother, and this church and pillar-stone mark the place of his birth, and exist as memorials of the conversion of the chieftain there "who first believed in the Cross in Ireland." That this chieftain was St. Ciaran's own father there are cogent grounds for advancing. We have already seen that Lughaidh, the father of Ciaran, who was son of Ruman Duach, then King of Ossory, having espoused Liedania, the daughter of Maine Cherr, then King of Corca-Laighe, continued to reside with his wife in her own country, and that about the same period seven princes of that territory assumed the kingship of Ossory, and seven Ossory chieftains took the kingship of Corca-Laighe; whence it would appear that Ciaran's father was the first of the seven Ossorian chieftains who usurped the government or kingship in his mother's country; and that the chieftain converted there by St. Ciaran was not a native prince of that country is directly to be inferred from the account of the matter recorded in the "*Genealogy of the Corca Laighe*."

"Lighain [Liedania], daughter of Maine, who was the mother of Ciaran of Saighir. He was born at Fintract Clere. Here was [dwelling] the chieftain who first believed in the Cross in Ireland, for Ciaran had taken Saighir thirty years before Patrick arrived. It was he [Ciaran] that predicted to the progeny of Eiderscel, reign and chieftainship over their race for ever, and it was he who left to the King of Corca-Laighe the *eniclann* of a king of a province, for their having first believed in the cross. And Ciaran is the senior of the Saints of Eire, and it was he [Ciaran] that

granted it [*i.e.* *eniclann*] to them for having been the first to grant him Cill-Chiarain."

It will be noted that the writer of this passage distinguishes the Chieftain of the O'Driscoll's from the King of Corca Laighe; to the former St. Ciaran grants "reign and chieftainship for ever;" to the latter he left "the *eniclann* of the king of a province." The *eniclann* was the tribute due to a chieftain for his protection, but the O'Driscolls had been the hereditary chiefs of Corca Laighe long anterior to Ciaran's time, and, therefore, it could not be to him they owed their right or title to tribute or protection in their native tribeland. But Ciaran's father having no hereditary or other right to tribute or chieftainship in that country, save what he obtained by his marriage with the Chieftain's daughter, and this lady having been Ciaran's mother, the saint on his return from Rome, lifted his father to the dignity of a local prince, obtaining from the O'Driscolls for him the right to protection and tribute due to a provincial king, because he was the first chieftain "who believed in the Cross in Ireland," and because he conferred on the saint the lands still called Kill-Ciaran.

St. Liedania, or Lican, was most probably the first, and certainly the most illustrious of the converts of St. Ciaran; and yet it is singular that neither her own, nor her husband's name, is to be found in the list of the saints belonging to the "house of St. Ciaran," from which it would appear that after their marriage they did not return to Ossory, and, therefore, could not have been said to be "of the family of the Ossorians." "All the writers of the acts of Ciaran," says Colgan, "give his mother's name as Liadhain. She was a woman of the greatest holiness, and amongst the first, if not absolutely the first, who, retiring into a convent, embraced an ascetic life, and propagated it throughout Ireland, as appears from the Life of St. Ciaran. She is venerated in the church called after her name, Cill Liadhain (Killyon), *i.e.* the cell of Liadhain (Lean or Lyan), near Saighir, on the 11th of August, according to Marianus O'Gor, Maguire, and the Martyrology of Donegal." The feast of St. Ciaran's mother is thus entered in the "Table" to the Martyrology of Donegal at the 11th August:—"Liadain, widow, mother of Ciaran, of Saighir, and the first abbess among the virgin saints of Ireland."

Here it would at first sight appear that Ciaran's father had died before he himself had returned from Rome, as otherwise his mother

could not be styled a "widow" and the first abbess in Ireland." It is true she might have entered a convent during her husband's lifetime; but this would pre-suppose that Ciaran's father had been a Christian at the time—and there are good grounds for asserting that he was one, if not the very first, of Ciaran's converts. It will be remembered that Ciaran had attained the fiftieth year of his age at the period of his return from Rome, when his parents must have been at least twenty years in his advance, or about seventy at the time. We may be satisfied that on landing in Ireland, after twenty years absence, Ciaran's first impulse turned towards home, where his father and mother were then far advanced in the wane of life. We can well conceive the plenitude of joy with which the old couple recognised their returned son—not after wasting his youth and substance in foreign indulgence, but in the maturity of his manhood, a dignified pontiff, shining in the isolated brilliancy of the Christian priesthood, amidst the pagan gloom that then overshadowed the land. In him they now beheld the realization of the beautiful presage¹ which before his conception foreshadowed his future pre-eminence as the "first-born of the saints of Ireland." Soon did his teaching carry conviction to their understanding, whilst their pious hearts yielded with equal facility to the gospel maxims of Christian perfection. It was then this old regulus conferred on the saint the lands of Kilkieran and Traighkieran, and for which he has been eulogised as "the chieftain who first believed in the cross in Ireland," whilst his aged spouse, in the sentiments of her first fervour, retired with other females to a life of seclusion, and, in this sense, might be termed a "widow," and "the first abbess among the virgin saints in Ireland."

We should have other memorials of St. Ciaran yet existing in his mother's country. I am not aware whether any trace is now extant of her convent in Ross Beannchor, where Ciaran used to visit her every Christmas, or of Carrig Conchie, on Traighkieran, which was wont to float with Ciaran to dry land at his pleasure. See above p. 160-172.

¹ "Presage." See above p. 65.

CHAPTER IV.

RATH CIARAN AND DURNAUNE.

Rathkieran is the name of a church which gives name to a parish and townland in the barony of Iverk, and on the north bank of the river Suir. The raths were the earthen fortresses or entrenched mansion places of the Irish chieftains, and were usually named after the personage for whose occupation they had been erected, but the site of the church and cemetery of Rath-Ciaran occupy the summit of an eminence too extensive to have been originally an artificial mound, or a rath, as the word is generally understood; whence it would appear that Ciaran had his monastery erected on this natural eminence, and may have entrenched or fortified it against the turbulence of the time. Or this elevation may have been a previously fortified enclosure, of which Ciaran availed himself for the erection of his church. The tradition of the place asserts that a fine spring of water, called "St. Ciaran's well," formerly ran from the south side of this rath to the river Suir. There is no trace of such a well there at present. According to the tradition of the County of Kilkenny, which we have illustrated above at p. 133, this church of Rathkieran was the scene of the first interview in Ireland between the Irish apostle and St. Ciaran, and from the result of this interview is said to have been derived the name of a very primitive hamlet situated about one mile south-west of the church called "Durnaune," which a high authority¹ in Irish literature has recently translated "stupid, obstinate, or sulky," and he gives the following legend in illustration of its derivation, which I quote here for the purpose of correcting and of settling the disputed meaning of the word Durnaune, and the origin of its application to this locality:—

"The peasantry of this and the surrounding districts have a legend to account for the name. They say when St. Patrick came to Iverk the people received him very rudely, and when he came late one evening to the monastery of St. Kieran the monks refused him admittance by shutting the door in his face—and still worse, a woman who lived in the village of Ballinorea, cooked up an old yellow hound with poison, and sent it to him on a dish for his dinner; but the saint having detected the plot, uttered a bitter speech, in which he predicted that the inhabitants should be known

¹ "High authority," *i.e.* Dr. Joyce. See "Origin and History of the Irish names of Places," second series, p. 34.

to the end of the world by the name of Doornanes—that is, adds Dr. Joyce, “a churlish, obstinate people.”

The story of the poisoned hound is well known in the southern parts of the county of Kilkenny. It was first reduced to writing, and published in the local *Archæological Journal* by the late Dr. O'Donovan, a native of the place, and the highest authority that can be followed on the point. His version of the legend¹ is as follows:—

“On the townland in which I was born,” situated in the parish of Kilcolumb, Barony of Ida, and County of Kilkenny, there is an elevation called ‘Conbuidhe,’ in connection with which, and to account for its name, the following legend is told: St. Patrick, travelling through the plains of Ossory, came to a hill then called *Knoc-na-radharc*, *i.e.* the Hill of the Sights or Views (evidently the present Tory Hill), and, being struck with the beauty of the situation, resolved to build a church there, and, while the work was progressing, a woman, who lived in the adjacent village of Ballincrea, sent St. Patrick a present of an animal cooked in a dish for his dinner. The saint did not like to taste the flesh of the animal, as he found some of the inhabitants there still stubborn pagans. So, laying the dish on a large stone, he prayed God to restore to life the cooked animal. His prayer was heard, and a yellow hound sprung from the dish and ran in the direction of the ‘Three Waters,’ [*i.e.* the confluence of the Suir, Nore, and Barrow]. St. Patrick desired the workmen to pursue and kill the hound, otherwise it would blast the fruit of the earth, and injure all living things in its course. The people obeyed the saint, followed the hound, and killed it exactly a mile to the east of the place whence it started. They buried it on the road-side, and out of its grave sprung up a white-thorn bush called *sgeithin-na-con*, *i.e.* the little skeough, or bush of the hound, which, concludes O'Donovan, “remains to the present day.” The town of Ballincrea, the scene of this story, is still to be seen at the foot of Tory Hill, in the parish of Kilcolumb, between New Ross and Waterford. The town of Durnaune is in the parish of Rathkieran, between Waterford and Carrick-on-Suir, the two localities of Ballincrea and Durnaune being about ten miles asunder, which conclusively proves that the legend of the poisoned

¹ “Legend.” See “Transactions of Kilkenny Archæological Society, 1851, p. 362 et seq.

hound has no connection either directly or remotely with the name of the village of Durnaune.

It is of importance to note here that the parish of Rathpatrick extends from near Ballincrea to the "meeting of the waters." The old church of Rathpatrick, now in ruins, is situated within half a mile of the parish chapel of Slieverue, and if this was the church which Patrick was engaged in erecting when the pagan woman intended to poison him, he should have taken up his residence in some place in the neighbourhood, and from his dwelling there the place would be called St. Patrick's Rath, and ultimately Rathpatrick, which it still retains. If the tradition respecting the poisoned hound has any foundation, as most such traditions have, it will follow that St. Patrick made this part of the country the line of his journey to the south of Ossory, and that after leaving Rathpatrick he followed the course of the river Suir, which conducted him from the "meeting of the waters" to the monastery of Rathkieran, where we are told he met St. Ciaran for the first time in Ireland.

O'Donovan's account of the interview between St. Patrick and St. Ciaran has no reference whatever to the story of the poisoned hound. We here give it in his own words: "It is said traditionally that St. Patrick met St. Ciaran for the first time (in Ireland) A.D. 439, at the Church of Rathkieran, in Iverk, that Kieran did not wish to acknowledge Patrick's superiority, that he received him very coolly, and refused to be dictated to by him, and St. Patrick was so displeased at this reception that he called the inhabitants of Iverk Durnanes, and predicted that they would be so called to the end of the world."

That a degree of some such national jealousy did exist at that time we have seen affirmed by a very high authority; but that no such feelings of rivalry had been entertained by St. Ciaran towards the Irish apostle we have conclusively established above, p. 136, where we have it recorded from the Life of St. Declan that "Ciaran, indeed, yielded all subjection and concord, and supremacy to Patrick, both when he was present and absent;" and that the village of Durnaune does not derive its name from any misunderstanding between St. Ciaran and the Irish apostle we shall now very satisfactorily prove.

Doornane, or more correctly Durnaune, is composed of three Irish words, namely, *dur-na-abhan*. *Dur*, according to Dr. Joyce and

O'Reilly's Irish Dictionary, means sulky or stubborn; *na* is the Irish form of the genitive case, and is equivalent to our English word "of," and *abhan*, pronounced aun, is the well-known Irish form of our English word river. Consequently, Durnaune means in English the sulk or obstinacy of the river. I have it on the authority of the Very Rev. E. Walsh, the highly respected P.P. of Mooncoin, that on many occasions within his own memory, in cases of spring-tides meeting high water coming down from the country, in the conflict between the opposing forces of the down stream of the river contending with the swelling of the tide, as it forces the river back in its course from Waterford, that in the struggle of their wrangling with each other, the grounds along the river are torn up, the embankments, plantations and field-fences are uprooted, and hence, the locality was originally and appropriately called *Dur-na-abhan*, anglicised Durnaune, *i.e.* the stubbornness or sulk of the river. This etymology, of course, strips the locality of its legendary and traditionary romance, but it is both a rational and a natural origin of the name of the place. In this etymology of the word Durnaune I think we have the key to the meaning of the word Thurles. The Four Masters write the word *Durlas*, which must be a contraction of *durghlas*. The "gh" being elipsed, you have Durlas, the stubborn or sulky river. The grounds about Thurles being low and flat there is no fall to the river there, and it travels along its bed slowly and sulkily, like a fellow in the street, who, having no object or purpose before him, paces along in a sulky, monotonous mood.

The history of the church of Rathkieran is involved in complete obscurity. In the year 1175 Donald O'Brian, of Limerick, having burned down the then episcopal city of Kilkenny, Donald O'Fogharty, the then bishop of this see, retired to the church of Rathkieran, which, during the turbulence of the Anglo-Norman invasion, he appears to have used as his cathedral. He died here on the 8th May, 1178. He was the last "Coarb of Ciaran" of Saighir, and must have adopted this church for his cathedral from its having been a foundation of the same illustrious patron. See Ware's "Bishops" at Ossory.

CHAPTER V.

FEARTA-NA-CEARACH.

The church of St. Ciaran of Fearta, as it is popularly called, is situated in the north-western extreme of the County of Kilkenny, and is well known to antiquarians for its venerable round tower. Fearta-na-gCearach has been translated the graves of the sheep, and Dr. O'Donovan supposes the word to have been originally applied to this locality, or the church to have been originally so denominated "from the carcasses of a great number of sheep which died of a mortality having been buried there." O'Donovan gives a local tradition as his authority for this statement; but after much inquiry in the neighbourhood, where I have had frequent opportunities of conversing with the people of the place, I could discover no trace of any such tradition having been ever extant in that locality. But, even if it had, such a tradition could not be received as an authority on this point, for the pious regards entertained by our ancestors for the consecrated enclosures which contained the bones of their kindred would not permit such a sacrilege as to mingle with the ashes of their fathers the carcasses of plague-stricken brutes. The word feart implies in Irish a human grave, and in Pagan, as in Christian times, designated the enclosure in which reposed the mortal remains of a human being. We have already seen that the original disciples of St. Ciaran at Saighir were denominated the Boar, the Fox, the Badger, the Doe, the Wolf, &c., and from the Boar and the Badger the churches of Kiltorcan and Tullaghanbrogue are respectively named. Why might he not also have a disciple called the sheep, who would be so named from his simplicity or other sheep-like peculiarity? It is granted that St. Ciaran himself was the founder of this church of Fearta, which, most probably, had been a place of pagan sepulture, for this word *fearta*, being the plural of *feart*, signifies a place of graves, or, as we would now call it, a "graveyard." The saint should necessarily place the institution under the care of one of his disciples, and if this disciple was the sheep he would die and be buried there, and from him the place would be subsequently termed *Fearta-na-g-Ceareach*, i.e. the *Fearta* or the graveyard of the sheep.

This church of Fearta is frequently referred to in the Irish annals, and must have been an extensive and opulent ecclesiastical establishment in ancient times.

In the year 836 the Danes of Waterford made a raid into Ossory. They pillaged and burned all the churches that lay in their course. *Oill-Finnche*, i.e. St. Finnche's Church, now Sheepstown; *Laichtene*, i.e. St. Lactan's Church, now Freshford, were consumed, and then is recorded "The Victory of Feartha was gained by the foreigners," but, in 861 Cearbhal Mac Dunghal, the then distinguished King of Ossory, completely routed them out of that territory. This action is thus recorded under the year 861 by the Four Masters: "The killing of the foreigners at Feartagh-na-gCaireach by Cearbhal [*i.e.* O'Carroll], so that forty heads were left to him, and that he banished them [*i.e.* the Danes] from the territory." It may have been from the Danish occupation of this district that the place was first called *Gall-Magh*, anglicised Galmoy, which means the plain of the foreigners. There is a very primitive enclosure, with the remains of an old church, near the steeple of Feartha, called Tempul-na-Gall,¹ which appears to have been in former times the parish church of Galmoy.

In the year 1156, Muircheartach O'Loughlainn, King of Meath, led an army into Leinster, and reduced to subjection the notorious Dermaid Mac Murragh, and after receiving hostages from him for the performance of his fidelity, O'Loughlainn led his army into the territory then denominated "*Liath Osraigh*," i.e. Half Ossory, subsequently termed Upper Ossory,² where "he plundered both churches and territories." He appears to have crossed the Barrow at Athy, and thence proceeding through the kingdom of Laoighis or Leix till he came to "*Daurmagh-Ua-n-Duach*," i.e. to Dearthmagh of Ui Duach, or as it is now anglicised Durrow in Odagh, now Castledurrow, twelve Irish miles from the city of Kilkenny. Here he burned the church

¹ "Tempul-na-Gall." This old ruin would appear to have been anciently the Parish Church of Galmoy; for in a patent Roll of the 35th year of the reign of Elizabeth, 1594, "the rectories, parsonages, and tithes of Galmoye and Glashare, in the County of Kilkenny, being parcel of the possessions of the Monastery of St. John of Jerusalem," are granted to Piers Butler Fitz-Edmond of Roscrea. See Morrin's Rolls, p. 270.

² "Upper Ossory." The territory of Ossory was first divided in the reign of Diarmaid Mac Cearbhall, when, after his brother, Ceallach Mac Cearbhall, had been slain in the battle of Bealach, Muighne *Flann Sionna*, monarch of Ireland, marched into Ossory and restored Diarmaid to the throne from which he had been deposed by Ceallach. But after the departure of the monarch, Diarmaid's claim to the kingship being disputed by his relatives, many fierce battles were fought, and ultimately the territory was divided into Ossory proper and "Liath Ossory," since called in English "Upper Ossory." For an account of this transaction, see the "Three Fragments of Irish Annals," published by the Irish Archæological Society, MDCCCLX., p. 241.

and the town, and thence proceeded to "*Achadh-Mac-Airt*," now Aughmacart, near Cullahill, the church and hamlet of which he also committed to the flames. Thence continuing his course southwards, by the present Castle of Glashare, he arrived at the town of "*Cool-Caissin*," now Coolcashin, which he also burned, and then, looking westwards, over the great plain of *Magh-airbh*, in the centre of which stood the town and monastery of St. Ciaran, and his eye being caught by the noble steeple of Fearta,¹ as it towered above the adjacent hills, he directed his course thither by a road which must have been nearly identical with that by which you travel from Coolcashin by Rathlogan, through the primitive hamlet of "Beggery," to Fearta at the present day. But the intelligence of O'Loughlainn's cruelties having preceded him to this pious community, they, with "Eochaidh-Ua-Cuainn, the Chief Master," retired with the treasures of their church into their *Cloichteach*, or pillar tower, when the unsparing Celt, "*more Danish than the Danes themselves*," mercilessly forced the door of the tower, inserted ignitable materials within it, and, with savage cruelty, burned to death the human beings who had fled into it as a sanctuary. The steeple of Fearta, from that to the present day, is split from top to base from the effects of that conflagration, and exists as a monument of the atrocious character of O'Loughlainn, King of Meath.

At present there is no part of the County of Kilkenny where the name and memory of St. Ciaran are preserved with a higher degree of veneration and interest than in the parish of this ancient ruin. The round tower of Fearta presents a most imposing appear-

¹ "Fearta." The account of this raid of O'Lochlainn is found in the Annals of the Four Masters, under the year 1156, scattered through other matters, caused, apparently, by the annalists taking their materials from various sources and not entering them in consecutive order, but as they came to hand. Thus, at the opening of the year 1156, we have a record of the burning of the "Chief Master in the 'Cloieteach of Fearta.'" Next "Ceanannus was burned, both houses and churches," and immediately follows, "Daurnhagh [Durrow], Achadh Mic Airt [Aghamacart], Cool Cassin [Coolcashin], and Fearta Caerach" were burned. It is quite clear that this burning of Fearta is one and the same as the one recorded two lines previously, and in which the Chief Master perished. Lower down towards the end of the year we find the following entry, which throws light on the cause of those savage atrocities: "Another army was led by Muirheartach [Ua Lochlainn], and the people of the north of Ireland into Leinster, and they gave the Kingdom of Leinster to Diarmaid Mac Murchadh for hostages, and they [then] *plundered Osraighe both churches and territories*." This event is evidently misplaced in the Annals as the churches and towns of Ossory, named higher up, were those consumed in the flames of this plundering raid. By arranging the entries consecutively you have the narrative as given in the text.

ance from every stand-point for miles all round, the group of buildings as you approach seeming as if hung round in the mystic drapings of religious romance ; yet, as you near the sacred precincts, you will perceive much of the romance of antiquity to disappear as you stand before a ruined church of the 15th century, and of the perpendicular period in Gothic architecture. The round tower stands at the south angle of the west gable. From the north wall abuts a mortuary chapel of the Fitzpatrick family, who were apparently the founders of the present ruin.

After the English invasion, the community of Fearta adopted the rule of the Order of Canons Regular of St. Augustine. Besides the landed estates already noticed as being in the possession of this monastery, the church and lands of Donaghmore, near Johnstown, were also in its holding. Robert Shortal was the last Prior of this House ; on its suppression he was allowed five marks as an annual pension for life, which was to be paid out of the possessions of the suppressed Priory. 32nd year of the reign of Henry VIII., 1540. *Morrin's Rolls*, p. 60.

CHAPTER VI.

BOHER CIARAN.

By the western end of St. Ciaran's Church at Fearta, an obscure and apparently long unused road leads in a southerly direction. At a short distance from the churchyard this road is now turned from its original course, and is conducted by a modern line into Johnstown. The ancient part of this road is but a segment of a great original highway, which ran from Upper Ossory through the primitive hamlet of Galmoy, from which it still runs in a modernised form by the old church of Tempul-na-gall to the church of Fearta, where it is popularly denominated Kieran's *Boreen*, i.e. St Ciaran's little road. The Irish-speaking natives term it *Boher-Kieraun*. Mr. James Cormac, who resides on the spot, in Steepleview House, informs me that he remembers the old natives of the place to point out the original track of this road over the hills, that it was traced thence in a southward direction towards Callan, and that by it, in olden times, St. Ciaran used to send his horse without a rider, carrying letters to his several churches throughout Ossory. Following the line thus indicated, we ascend Ballyspellan hills, and passing out through a very remarkable declivity in the top of that ridge due south of the Church of Fearta, we descend to the Clomanta side of the mountain, and here, surrounded by hills, we find "Part of the parish of Fearta" completely insulated between the parishes of Balleen and Clomanta. Adjoining to this part of Fearta is another small parish named *Garry-na-managh*, i.e. the garden of the monks, and was so named from having been the tillage lands attached to the monastery of Fearta, in the days of its prosperity, and the old road which has conducted us here must have been the ordinary pathway by which, for centuries, the monks of the manastery daily travelled over these hills to their mountain farms. In this "part of Fearta" the remains of an ancient church still exists, and is named on the Ordnance Survey *Tempul-Chash-Shibawn*." There is there also the track of an old by-road open for about a mile or two through the fields, and a castle standing on the brow of this old pathway, which proves that this now obscure lane had been once a public highway, as castles always stood on the public passes of the country. The old road runs north-west from the castle towards the monastery of Fearta, and is most certainly a fragment of *Boher-Kieraun*; south from the

castle it is open to the boundary of the parish of Clomanto, from which it formerly ran by the "Deerpark" wall at the western end of the townland of Killashulan; it crossed the present Johnstown road at Clomanto cross roads, from which it is still open, and runs thence down to ford the stream from Clomanto Mills, after which it crept up the opposite acclivity on its way over the hills, in the direction of Tullaroan.

The peculiar and quaint aspect of this old roadway, when observed from Clomanto, at once convinces an observer of its extreme antiquity. After passing Clomanto the old road is partially closed up and partially modernised, but it is still traceable in broken sections on its way over the hills to the cross of Liss—one mile east of Tullaroan, where, though now superseded by modern road lines, it turns up again in the primitive townland of Brabstown, where, near "St. Margaret's well," a lane through the field is well known as "Boher-Kieraun;" and according to the tradition of the locality, was originally constructed by St. Ciaran and his scholars from Saighir, and the tradition further avers St. Ciaran's horse was on one occasion stopped here by an evil-minded chieftain, who also robbed him of the saint's letters, from which he learned all the secrets between Ciaran and the monks of his several churches, which so irritated the saint that he predicted their harvests here should be the last to ripen in any part of Ossory; and it is remarked that the crops from this place through Corstown are the last to ripen in the country. After leaving Brabstown, and following still in a southerly direction, we cross about eight miles of the country and find neither trace nor name of Ciaran's road till crossing a ford over the King's river between Callan and Kells, in the townland of Killinny; the people here again tell you that this is "St. Ciaran's road,"¹ and that it was by it he used to travel to the monastery of Kells in his missionary journey throughout the county. There was no monastery at Kells in the time of St. Ciaran, but the tradition singularly corroborates the popular belief at Fearta that this road originally ran southwards in the direction of Callan.

From Killinny, where St. Ciaran's road crosses the King's river,

¹ "St. Ciaran's road." For this item of information I am indebted to the kindness of my late lamented friend, John G. A. Prim, Esq., whose premature departure has left a blank in the city that cannot be filled up during the present generation. I think Mr. Prim quoted Mr. Hutchison as his authority for the locality of Killinny being called "St. Ciaran's road."

there leads from the opposite side of the stream a very old by-road running up the valley of the "glory river." It now runs into the modern road from Kells, but before this latter had been made the old road ran through Chapelizod demesne to the old village of Tinvaun, and thence to the old church of Sheepstown, from which it continued southwards through Mr. Cassin's farm-yard near Newmarket, over the hills of Carrickshock, and thence down to Rathkieran, on the bank of the Suir; but St. Ciaran's name is not here found in association with it. This was apparently the road by which the Danes of Waterford travelled from the south to the north of Ossory, when they burned the churches of Sheepstown, Freshford, and Fearta, in the year 836. An inquirer consulting the Ordnance one-inch map of the county of Kilkenny, and taking the several localities just indicated as guides or stations for his journey, will find that a road from Upper Ossory, connecting those several points, would be the most direct line of communication between the northern and southern extremes of the ancient principality of Ossory, and the still existing association of this old road with the name of St. Ciaran at the numerous stations along its line, renders it an historical memorial of his missionary journies, when, surrounded by his scholars, he traversed the tribeland of his ancestors, teaching along this ancient highway faith, obedience, and discipline to the turbulent tribesmen of his father's clan.

CHAPTER VII.

SUNDRY MEMORIALS OF ST. CIARAN IN OSSORY.

ISERT CIARAN ALSO CALLED INCHIKIERAN.

Isertkieran is the name of a church which gives name to a parish and townland in the barony of Slievardagh and county of Tipperary, adjoining the primitive hamlet of Mullinahone, five Irish miles south-west of Callan, and which was fixed on by Shane Mor O'Dugan as the common boundary of Ossory and Munster.¹ The site of this church being on the brink of a small rivulet, is locally best known as "Inchi-Kieran" (*i.e.* Ciaran's Inch, island or river land). On the Ordnance Survey it is denominated "Isert-Kieran," *i.e.* the desert, or lonely place of Ciaran. It is both important and interesting to note here that this church is the only one known to the writer outside the diocese of Ossory² dedicated to St. Ciaran of Saighir (except that of Traigh Ciaran, in his mother's country), and also that this church of "Isert Ciaran" stands on the site which retains the name of the battle in which Aengus had slaughtered St. Ciaran's people: "For (says Keating), from the defeat inflicted on the Ossorians, Mullach Indheona is so called to this day;" and here, adjoining this primitive hamlet of Mullinahone, is the ancient parish and church of "Isert Kieran," *i.e.* the desert or lonely place of Ciaran. From the situation of this church—occupying the site of "the mangling of the heroes" of Ciaran's family—it would appear that Aengus, on his reconciliation with Ciaran, and as some atonement for his injustice, conferred on the saint the lands on which this battle was fought, and on them Ciaran erected this church in memory of his fallen people, and thus consecrated to peace and piety the scene once desecrated by strife and bloodshed. Nothing is known of the history of this primitive, though now obscure, enclosure. If we believe the tradition still vividly preserved in Mullinahone, this was the third church erected in Ireland. It is now almost exclusively used for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children. For an account of the battle of Indheona, from which Mullinahone takes its name, see above chapter XI., p. 115.

¹ "Ossory and Munster." See above, p. 121, n. 1.

² "Diocese of Ossory." There are churches dedicated to St. Ciaran in Wales, not adverted to in this Essay.

BALLY CIARAN, NOW CALLED BALLYCARRAN.

The site of the ancient church of Ui Duach, we have already illustrated so far as our meagre resources permitted,¹ but there still remains associated with its history an interesting local denomination too important to be ignored in this Memoir.² The old ruin at "Three Castles Bridge," popularly known as the church of Odagh, was originally so named from its having been the church of the seven sons of Ruman Duach, of whom see above p. 110. This Ruman Duach was the grandfather of St. Ciaran, and, as a matter of course, his seven sons were the uncles of the saint. They must have been amongst the earliest of his converts—they had been all venerated as saints in the ancient Irish church, and this foundation at "Three Castles" is an existing memorial of their conversion to the Christian faith. There is a peculiarity common both to the barony of Cranagh and to the parish of Odagh, which, in connection with this ancient church, has a rather significant aspect. The entire of both that barony and parish are situated on the west side of the river Nore, with the exception of two townlands which lie on the east side of the river. Near Three Castles Bridge the boundary line of both the barony and the parish cross to the east side of the river, take in the two townlands referred to, and then return, as they started, in a united line to the river again. Those two townlands, which thus invited the boundary line to cross the river, are respectively named "Ballycarran" and "Ballycarran Little." They are now separate townlands, but were formerly one denomination. This we learn from an Inquisition taken at Gowran, 14th April, 1631 (36 Car. 1), which also gives us the derivation of the name of the locality. "Oliver Shortal was found seized of BALLYKERAN as parcel of his manor of Castledowgh," and in an Inquisition taken at Thomastown, 11th April, 1636 (76 Car. 1st), Edward FitzWilliam Butler was in possession of the manor, castle, town, and land of Castleduagh, with the rents, &c., of the town and lands of *Ballykirin*, &c. In another part of this Inquisition Ballykiran reads Ballykaran, which enables us to fix on both Ballykeran and Ballykirin as locally identical with the two townlands of Ballycarran at "Three Castles." Those lands may have been originally the bequest of some

¹ "Permitted." See above, p. 110, 123.

² "This memoir." See Ordnance Townland Survey, Sheet 14.

pious chieftain in honour of St. Ciaran, and as an endowment in favour of the church of Ui Duach, it having been the church of the saints' uncles. From some such cause the place may have been originally named Ballykieran, or St. Ciaran's town, which it still retains in a slightly modified form, and those lands as such perpetuate the name of the saint, and are an enduring memorial of his mission. In an Inquisition taken at Thomastown, 14th September, 1627 (No. 9, Car. 11), "Thomas Forestal, an Irish Papist, was found seized of 115 acres, &c., of land in the town of *Ballykieran*, in the barony of Galmoy," which, as being an Irish Papist, he is declared to have forfeited to the King. The writer has not been able to identify any locality in the barony of Galmoy called Ballykieran. It was probably some hamlet in Fearta, of which it would be interesting to know if the name be still extant.

CILL CIARAN OF INISTIÖGE.

Kilkieran is now the name of a townland in the parish of Inistiöge, but, from its local peculiarity, was apparently at some former time an independent parish. The few smaller townlands contiguous to that now called Kilkieran, were apparently formerly united to it under its own denomination, at which time the district so united was bounded on the north by the parish of Columbkil, on the east by that of Graiguenamanagh, on the west by the parish of Famma, and on the south by that of Inistiöge, to which it is now united. There is here a fine old ruin, richly clothed in ivy, called St. Ciaran's church, and an old Norman fortress, called Kilkieran Castle, and a beautiful spring of water known as St. Ciaran's well. Mr. John Moore, of Columbkil, an industrious and obliging antiquarian, tells me that a woman of this locality, now seventy-two years in life, informed him that a "patron" used to be held here in her grandfather's time, and that within her own lifetime the holy well here was desecrated by a person who had irreverently washed in it part of a pig which had died of a disease, upon which the well immediately ran dry, and so continued till a female relative of the narrator's reported the matter to the P.P. of Inistiöge, who gave her a vessel of holy water, which, on she pouring into the dry fountain in the name of St. Ciaran, instantaneously the water flowed in copious supply, and has so since continued. Nothing is known of the history of this interesting old place.

CILL CIARAN, IN OWNING.

Kilkieran is a townland in the parish of Owing, and barony of Iverk. There are here the ruins of a primitive church, dedicated to St. Ciaran, from which the place has been so named. Also there are in this old cemetery three ancient Irish stone crosses, uninscribed, and beautifully carved. There is near Kilkieran a place of some former importance, called "Skeough," *i.e.* the bush, which must have been planted here as a memorial of some event now no longer remembered. A "patron" used to be formerly held at this bush.

CILL CIARAN, IN THE BARONY OF GOWRAN.

Kilkieran, is the name of a townland and parish in the barony of Gowran, and runs east of the parish of St. John from Sandford's Court to Ballyfoyle. The site of the ancient church of this parish is marked on the Ordnance Survey, near the cross-roads of Kilkieran, about three Irish miles from Kilkenny. Nothing is known to the writer respecting this old church and parish beyond the fact that in a blake and lonely country the name and memory of the first bishop of Ossory are locally associated with them.

TOBER CIARAN.

Toberkieran is the name of a copious spring of water near the old parish church of Stonecarty, seven miles from Kilkenny, in the barony of Shillelogher. The name of this parish, *i.e.* Stonecarty, is an anglicised corruption of the Irish form *Stuain Cartach*, which means Cartach's district or land. It is thought by some that this church of Stonecarty was originally founded by St. Cartach, the disciple and successor of St. Ciaran in the church of Saighir. If it was so the well there might have been blessed by St. Ciaran when giving Cartach the charge of the church. There is no other foundation in Ossory associated with the name of St. Cartach but this, and that this was dedicated to, or founded by him, rests on no authority. It would appear more probable that the holy well here took its name from the patron saint of the church, and if this was so St. Ciaran should have been the patron of both the church and parish of Stonecarty.¹

¹ "Stonecarty." Since the above was written I have ascertained from Bishop Moran's "Spicelegium" that St. Ciaran is the patron saint of the parish and church of Stonecarty.

ST. CIARAN'S TREE.

St. Ciaran's tree is shown on the Ordnance Index Map of the Queen's County, in the parish of Rathdowney, and Barony of Clandonagh. This tree may have been originally planted as a memorial of the following event, narrated in the Life of St. Ciaran :—

“ A subject belonging to the king, whose name is Ceanfaladh, murdered Cronan, a friend of Ciaran's, and Ciaran restored him to life in seven days in Christ's name ; and on his being brought to life Ciaran said in the presence of the people, ‘ He that murdered you illegally, *i.e.* Ceanfaladh, shall soon be murdered himself and his body burned in the castle called *Rathundy*, in *Eileach*. ’ ”

If Rathundy be the original form of Rathdowney—as it appears to be, for it is situated on the very borders of the ancient Eileach O'Carroll—St. Ciaran's tree there would be a memorial of this miracle, and would perpetuate its memory by successive plantations to the present time.

St. Ciaran's tree is thus described to me by a trustworthy correspondent :—“ There still exists near the village of Errill a tree called ‘ St. Ciaran's tree,’ and a well called ‘ St. Ciaran's well,’ both venerated by the peasantry ; also, up to within fifty years ago, St. Ciaran's ‘ Patron ’ was held in a field adjoining both the tree and the well.”

KILL-CIARAN OF KELLS.

In the Charter of Henry IV. to the priory of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of Kells,¹ in the Co. of Kilkenny, the king grants *inter alia* to that monastery, “ the church of St. Ciaran, of Kells,” which proves that the ancient church there was dedicated to the first Bishop of Ossory. It is more than probable that St. Ciaran himself was the founder of the original church of Kells, and it is significant that we have traced his “ road ” from the north of Ossory to the neighbourhood of this church.

KILL-CIARAN OF CLASHACROW.

The site of this ancient parish church is now enclosed within the grounds of the Glebe House at Wellbrook, one mile from Freshford. In Bishop Moran's “ Spicilegium,” St. Ciaran is set down as patron

¹ “ Kells.” In Bishop Moran's “ Spicilegium,” the “ Inventio S. Crucis, 3 maii,” is set down as the patron feast of the parish and church of Kells. For the authority of the charter of Henry IV., I am indebted to the late Mr. Prim, whose transcript of that charter I copied myself.

of the "Church of Clashacrow, in the Deanery of Odagh," which is my authority for giving the church here the title of Kilkieran. Though the church and cemetery are enclosed within private premises, the right of sepulture is still enjoyed and exercised by the people. The old ruins were preserved with the greatest anxiety by the late Incumbent, Rev. R. Fowler. This venerable structure, with its consecrated site, stand on the east bank of a stream from which it apparently derives its name. This stream is formed out of numerous smaller streamlets which converge and unite in the valley of Ballinamara, and flowing thence through a deep ravine under the townland of Ballydowel to the treacherous ford at Wellbrook, gives name to the old church about which we have been enquiring; for the word Clashacrow comes from *Clash-na-cro*, the stream of slaughter or death—an appropriate descriptive epithet for a river which has its source in Ballinamara, *i.e.* *Baili-na-marbha*—the town of slaughter or death. Of this church I know of no other existing memorial connecting it with St. Ciaran.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEMORIALS OF ST. CIARAN IN THE CITY OF KILKENNY.

ST. CIARAN'S CHAIR.

In the north transept of St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, is preserved an ancient ecclesiastical stall, well known as "St. Ciaran's chair," and is thus described by the Rev. James Graves:¹ "The two sides or arms of a stall, carved in Kilkenny marble, and adorned with early English foliage. The stone work forming the present seat is modern; the arms are undoubtedly of the thirteenth century, contemporary with the cathedral itself, but not of an earlier date. It probably was one of the stalls of canons or prebendaries." From the fact of its being denominated St. Ciaran's chair, its arms most probably formed part of the original episcopal throne of the cathedral. The Bishop being the successor of St. Ciaran, his stall might be properly termed the saint's chair, which could not be said with equal propriety of the stalls of either the canons or prebendaries.

I see no reason to doubt that the two arms of this chair filled the same office in the episcopal throne of the cathedral down to the period when it finally passed out of the possession of the Catholics. From a reference by Bishop Rothe to the episcopal throne, as it stood in his time, it might be inferred that it was a stone structure. He says—"On the left side of the choir, as you enter, the bishop occupied an apse, near the altar, elevated on *steps of hewn stone*." We know that the *sedelia* used by the officiating clergy, and placed immediately opposite the throne of the bishop, was a stone erection, and had been carried up in the masonry of the wall; and there is nothing more probable than that the episcopal throne was also constructed of the same enduring material, and that the carved stone arms of St. Ciaran's chair formed the sides of the throne which stood in the apse on the elevated platform placed at the top of the "hewn stone steps."

In the year 1756, Bishop Pococke, a zealous and learned antiquarian, fitted up the choir of the church with the galleries, pannelling, &c., which were taken down in 1865, and in doing so the bishop

¹ History, Antiquities, and Architecture of the Cathedral Church of St. Canice, p. 75.

removed to the nave and aisles such objects of antiquarian interest as would otherwise be concealed behind the sheeting. One of those was the recumbent effigy of Bishop de Ledrede, which he had erected as an altar tomb under the eastmost window of the north aisle, where it remained till its original niche was discovered by the removal of the sheeting, in the north wall of the choir, to which it was restored in 1867. By the side of De Ledrede's monument, according to Bishop Rothe, stood the episcopal throne, and we may confidently assert that on the same occasion, and with the same object in view, Pococke took down this structure also, which, being very ancient, the only portions of it worth preserving, were its carved arms; these he re-erected in the north transept of the Cathedral, where they still remain under the name of "St. Ciaran's chair." The original throne of the cathedral may have been known as St. Ciaran's Chair, but we have no authority so to assert.

ST. CIARAN'S STATUE.

A figure of St. Ciaran stood as one of the four patron saints of the City of Kilkenny on the canopy of the ancient market cross, which stood in the middle of High-street, and occupied the site of the present Tholsel pump. The canopy of this building was supported by five pillars, and was formed of four pediments, and on the apex of each stood respectively, as patrons of the town, SS. Patrick, Ciaran, Kenny, and Bridget. This beautiful piece of ecclesiastical street-ornamentation was erected in A.D. 1335, and was taken down by the Cromwellian Corporation of the City in A.D. 1771. What became of the figures of the four patron saints is not known. For the history of the ancient Market Cross of Kilkenny see a highly interesting paper by the late J. G. A. Prim, Esq., *Kilkenny Archæological Journal*, vol. 1, A.D. 1849.

ST. CIARAN'S WELL.

This beautiful spring of water in the garden of the old house in King-street¹ is that already denominated "Kyrock's" and

¹ "Old house in King-street." This aristocratic old mansion, adjoining the public markets, was modernised towards the end of the last century. It still preserves many traces of medieval peculiarities. The bottom storey is in its original state—groined arched ceilings, supported by massive piers—circular headed doorways, with dressed stone jambs—graceful stone frames, and mullions of one or two of the original windows, and the absence of an original fire-place or chimney, indicate the house to be as old as the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. In the grounds to the rear of the mansion, St. Ciaran's Well is a most inviting and interesting object.

Kenerock's Well," and was in former times a fountain of much celebrity. As the history of this well has been illustrated already in the pages of this Memoir¹ as far as our scant materials enabled us, it will suffice here to add that this was apparently the well stated in the Life of Ciaran to have been built for his use by an angel, and to which he retired towards the close of his life, that its waters were efficacious for the cure of diseases, and that "its name is Ciaran's Well."² There formerly stood by the side of this well a chapel which it may be safely asserted had been originally dedicated to St. Ciaran, and must have been the English representative of an ancient Irish church erected under his invocation in this city, if not the representative of the church by the river called Heoir,³ where Patrick had directed Ciaran to fix his abode.⁴ The old chapel at St. Ciaran's well was standing there till late in the latter half of the last century. St. Ciaran's well still preserves much of its original interesting freshness. It flows in copious and perpetual supply, and retains its refreshing coolness through the heat of the warmest summer.

This well is covered by a small and rudely stone-roofed house, which does not retain any trace of its having been an ancient construction. But in the basin of the well is inserted a circular baptismal font of Kilkenny marble, through the aperture in the bottom of which the water of this beautiful fountain is constantly boiling up. It would be interesting if we could discover to what church in Kilkenny this font belonged before it had been appropriated to its present office. It was not removed here from either St. Canice's or St. Mary's churches, as their original fonts still remain on their respective premises. Neither could it have been the font of St. Francis's Abbey, as it was not a baptismal church, and it suggests itself to me as probable that it may have been the font of St. Ciaran's old chapel, which, on being demolished here towards the end of the last century,⁵ the font was preserved and applied

¹ "This Memoir." See above p. 100, n. 2, 176-177, n. 2.

² "Ciaran's Well." See above p. 174, 175.

³ River called Heoir, *i.e.*, the Nore. See above p. 99.

⁴ "Fix his abode." See above p. 98.

⁵ "Last century." In the year 1811, the Corporation of Kilkenny executed a lease of "St. Ciaran's Well" to Nathaniel Alcock, then one of their own body, for five shillings a year. "St. Ciaran's Well" was the name of an open space or commons now forming part of the public market. In 1688 William Jackson paid 10s a year "for a waste in St. Ciaran's well." One of the conditions on which the Corporation leased away the ground to Alcock was that he should establish a fish shambles there, which he accordingly did, and in doing so demolished the "old chapel near Kyrock's well."

to its present use. It is deserving of note here also that within about six feet of this well there is a water-pump sunk in the public market, in the well of which the water never rises higher than within seven feet of the surface, while St. Ciaran's well, on the same level, is supplied with a constant and copious overflow.

ST. CIARAN'S COLLEGE.

During the latter half of the last century every memorial of St. Ciaran may be said to have disappeared from the city. The old chapel at his well was demolished. The well itself, being enclosed in the courtyard of a private mansion, became appropriated to social and profane uses. The market cross having been taken down, the statue of our saint, with those of the other patrons of the town, was lost sight of by the people, so that at the opening of the present century, no public memorial existed to connect the present city of Kilkenny with the name or memory of the first Bishop of Ossory. In the year 1811 the Rev. Kyran Marum was appointed parish priest of St. John's, in this city. He soon after opened a Catholic seminary¹ in the house in Maudlin-street now used as the Presbytery, and placed it under the patronage of St. Ciaran. In 1815, being then Bishop of Ossory, Birchfield College was opened by him for ecclesiastical students, and it too was sometimes, but not frequently, called St. Ciaran's College. In 1829 the Most Rev. Dr. Kinsella was promoted to the See of Ossory. He was a learned and enlightened prelate, and entertained a peculiar veneration towards the patron saint of the diocese, which suggested to him the idea of signalising his episcopate by erecting, under the patronage of his sainted patron, as well as to meet the growing necessity of the time, a great diocesan institution, which would again revive and perpetuate to future ages the name and the memory of St. Ciaran. The first stone of St. Ciaran's College was laid on the 5th of March, 1836—St. Ciaran's day—by the Rev. Nicholas Shearman,² P.P., St. Patrick's, in this city. The ceremonial was witnessed by a large

¹ "Catholic Seminary." The subject of Catholic education in Kilkenny during the end of the last and the beginning of the present century has been recently and amply illustrated in a highly interesting pamphlet, entitled "History of the Catholic Schools of Kilkenny, from Father Peter White's School, about 1558 to the present time." By an Ossory Priest. Kilkenny, 1875.

² "Rev. Nicholas Shearman." In the unavoidable absence of Bishop Kinsella, who was engaged on the occasion at a synod of the Bishops of Ireland in Dublin.

assemblage of citizens and clergy of that day, most of whom have long since gone to a better world.

SS. MARY'S AND CIARAN'S CATHEDRAL.

The first stone of the new Cathedral of Ossory was laid by the Most Rev. Dr. Kinsella, on the 20th of August,¹ being the Sunday within the Octave of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and this having been the ancient "patron" feast of St. Mary's parish, in this city, he founded the church under the title of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But at the solemn consecration of this same church, by the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, on Sunday, the 4th October, 1857, it was dedicated to God under the invocation of SS. Mary and Ciaran,² since which date St. Ciaran's day has been annually solemnized in the Cathedral as the feast of the titular of that church and the patron of the diocese. And thus, after fourteen centuries, has been fulfilled the prediction of the Irish Apostle—namely, that by the river called Heoir³ Ciaran should build a church, and that there his name would be held in veneration till the resurrection of the dead.

ST. CIARAN'S BELL.

This is the name of the present melodious-toned bell of the new

¹ "20th August." The date on the Mural Slab over the principal entrance doorway is "xviii August," which is not accurate. The intention of the bishop had been to lay the "first stone" of the building on the 15th August, the festival of the "Assumption." A great concourse assembled to witness the ceremonial, at two o'clock, but though the forenoon had been a delightful "Lady Day in Harvest," at the hour named the clouds suddenly darkened, and such a downpour of rain followed as rendered the ceremonial an impossibility for that day. The "first stone" of the Cathedral was laid on the following Sunday morning at nine o'clock, at which comparatively few of the citizens were present. The 15th August that year fell upon Tuesday, and, as a matter of course, the following Sunday should be the 20th, not the xviii. of the month. This entablature, with its incorrect inscription, was erected in the month of September, 1857. See *Kilkenny Journal*, August 23, 1843.

² "SS. Mary and Ciaran." As far as the writer is aware, there is no memorial existing of the dedication of the Cathedral to St. Ciaran as joint patron with the Blessed Virgin, and he therefore feels it necessary to give the authority on which he has advanced the assertion. That authority is a verbal statement of the late Right Rev. Dr. Walsh, who, in the month of October 1857, immediately after the consecration of the church, in answer to an inquiry made by the writer, said—"The chapel in the north transept has not been dedicated to St. Ciaran;" for, added the bishop, "the church itself having been solemnly consecrated under the invocation of SS. Mary and Ciaran, the high altar in the chancel was consecrated under their patronage also, and it is not necessary or usual to have a second altar, or a chapel in any church dedicated to a saint who is the special patron, or one of the special patrons of that church." If no memorial was made of the dedication of the Cathedral to St. Ciaran as joint patron with the Blessed Virgin, it is well to place the circumstances on record here.

³ "River called Heoir," i.e. the Nore. See above, p. 98, 99.

cathedral. It was erected originally in a timber campanile, in the yard of the cathedral, on the 18th December, 1869, on which occasion it was solemnly blessed and dedicated in honour of St. Ciaran by the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh. In the year 1872, on Thursday, the 21st November, St. Ciaran's bell was taken out of this temporary erection, and elevated into its present position in the tower of the cathedral. The following legend, in raised Roman letters, runs round the exterior of the bell :—"This bell is dedicated to St. Ciaran, patron of Ossory." The bell was manufactured by Murphy, of Dublin, and weighs 32 cwt.

ST. CIARAN'S DAY.

The feast of St. Ciaran is set down in all the martyrologies at the 5th March, and must have been observed in Ireland since the death of the saint himself. One of the three petitions which St. Ciaran addressed to the angel immediately before his death, and which the angel assured him had been granted, was "that whosoever should keep holy his (*i.e.* Ciaran's) day should not want the riches of this world during life, nor the kingdom of heaven after death."¹ Though it looks rather doubtful that St. Ciaran would canonize himself by appointing the anniversary of his death to be kept holy as a memorial of his own sanctity, yet the anecdote proves that St. Ciaran's day had been observed as a festival in the early part of the ninth century, when the life of Ciaran was being written. In the Martyrology of Tallagh, and in the *Feiliere* or metrical Calendar, both compiled by Aengus the Culdee before the end of the eighth century, the feast of St. Ciaran, with "his hosts of Saighir," is duly entered. In the "Martyrology of Marianus O'Gorman," compiled shortly before the English invasion, the feast of St. Ciaran also holds its place. I do not find any memorial on record of the status of St. Ciaran's day, or of how it ranked amongst the festivals of the Irish Church from the English invasion down to the Reformation. In a synod of the Irish (or, rather, of the Anglo-Irish) Clergy, held in Dublin, under the episcopate of Alexander de Bicknor,² it is decreed that the festivals of SS. Patrick, Maidoc, or Aiden of Ferns, Kenny of Ossory, &c., should be celebrated with a "double rite." The festival of St. Ciaran is not included; yet in the Diocese of Ossory I think we have evidence to

¹ "After death." See above p. 173.

² "Alexander de Bicknor." He was Archbishop of Dublin from 1313 to 1349. See an account of this Synod in Wares "Bishops" at Dublin.

show that "St. Ciaran's day" must have been observed as a "first-class" festival. His chair is one of the oldest memorials preserved in St. Canice's Church; his statue, on the ancient market cross of Kilkenny, was erected by the English colonists so early as the year 1335; the reputation of "St. Ciaran's Well" and the "Old Chapel" standing on its brink down to the end of the last century; his effigy, with that of St. Canice was, by orders of David Rothe, carved on this bishop's own monument in St. Canice's Church—all of which render it probable that the Anglo-Irish Catholics of Kilkenny honored the memory of St. Ciaran by a solemn observance of his festival day; and one of the earliest vistas we obtain into the ecclesiastical state of Kilkenny, on the relaxation of the "Penal Laws," conclusively proves that "St. Ciaran's day" had been down to that time observed as a "holiday of obligation"¹ in the diocese of Ossory. In the year 1773, Bishop Thomas de Burgo addressed the following pastoral "To the Rev. Pastors and other Clergymen of the diocese of Ossory":—"Our Most Holy Father Pope Clement XIV., on the 31st January last, granted an indult to this, our diocese of Ossory, whereby his Holiness took away the obligation of hearing Mass from all the retrenched holidays in Number Eighteen: To Wit—[Here he names the now retrenched holidays, and continues]:—The same indult takes off the obligation also of hearing Mass on *St.*

¹ "Holiday of obligation." Saint Ciaran's day would appear to have formerly ranked in the diocese of Ossory as high as St. Patrick's day, or as one equally remarkable. On the 15th of March, 1760, Bishop Thomas de Burgo, who had been promoted to the See of Ossory on the previous year, sends the following letter "To the pastors and other clergymen" to notify at their respective masses on the following Sunday:—"That the Easter duty is to be performed from St. Patrick's day to Ascension day." In the following year, 1761, he writes on the 27th February "To the pastors and other clergymen of Kilkenny," to publish at their respective masses on the following Sunday: "That the Easter duty is to be performed from *St. Ciaran's day* till Ascension day." In the year 1766 Bishop de Burgo, in publishing his "Regulations for Lent," in which he gives leave to eat flesh meat from the first Sunday of Lent inclusive, to Palm Sunday *exclusive*, excepting Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, "but only in case the meat be boiled and the broth given to the poor;" then adds, "The Easter duty is to begin on *St. Ciaran's day*." And Dr. Troy, in his instructions for Lent (1778), tells the reverend pastors to inform their flocks that the "Easter duty will be performed from *St. Ciaran's day* to Ascension day." Those several references to St. Ciaran's day show that it was formerly much more popularly known than it has been during the present century. If a promulgation of the same import were made within the past thirty or forty years, the first inquiry would be—"When will be St. Ciaran's day?" See MS. Book preserved in the Library of St. Ciaran's College, Kilkenny, being transcriptions from documents carried to Dublin from Kilkenny by Dr. Troy, and recovered by Dr. Moran, who restored them to their original archives in the Diocesan Library.

Ciaran's and St. Kenny's days, and on all the patrons of parishes. However, his Holiness enjoins me to prescribe some pious work to be performed, by way of commutation, on each of the mentioned former holidays instead of hearing Mass; and the pious work I prescribe is to say seven Paters and seven Aves." From this date "St. Ciaran's day" was gradually being lost sight of in popular estimation. After the erection of the new Cathedral, of which St. Ciaran is secondary patron, the Right Rev. Dr. Walsh, in the year 1858, directed the feast of St. Ciaran to be published in the Cathedral on the Sunday preceding the festival as a day of special devotion and plenary indulgence, St. Ciaran being the "patron of the diocese and the titular of this Church," and, at the same date, established the custom, still existing, of solemnising the feast by a solemn High Mass (*Coram Episcopo*), at which the president, the professors, and students of St. Ciaran's College assist. In the year 1868 the Roman Congregation of Rites ordered the feasts of the diocesan patron saints of Ireland to be observed by the entire clergy of the Irish Church: since when the feast of St. Ciaran stands in the general "ordo" as a minor Double, but in the diocese of Ossory still holds its ancient status as "a Double of the first class." In the year 1872 the feast of St. Ciaran was solemnised with unusual splendour in the Metropolitan Church of Dublin, when, in the presence of many of the bishops of Ireland and most of the parish priests of Ossory, the distinguished scholar and exemplary prelate, Dr. Patrick Francis Moran, was consecrated bishop of the ancient See of St. Ciaran, by his Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin.

APPENDIX.

TEXT OF THE LEGEND OF THE LIFE OF ST. CIARAN.

(*For History of this Legend see above, Part I., Chap. III.*)

Beatissimus Episcopus Ciaranus Sanctorum Hiberniæ Primogenitus—The most blessed Bishop Ciaran, the first-born of the saints of Ireland, was a native of the western part of Leinster, in the district called Osraighe. All the Irish were anti-Christian and Pagan at the time. His father's name was Lughaidh, and was descended from the nobility of Osraighe. The name of his mother was Liedania, and was a native of Corca-Laighe, in the western part of Munster. Before she conceived Ciaran she saw in a vision, as if a star had fallen into her mouth, and she revealed the same to the Druids and learned men of her time, who informed her that she would bring forth a son who would be the greatest prodigy of his age, and whose fame and virtues would be spoken of to the end of time, and after this the holy son Ciaran was born, and nurtured in the island called Cleire, in Corca Laighe; and verily did God elect him in his mother's womb. His preceptors, as well as all who saw him, were astonished at his extraordinary size. His acts were virtuous—he was meek by nature, and his conversation was pleasing;—his works were prosperous and his counsels edifying, and he also excelled in everything pertaining to man.

On a certain day that he was in the aforesaid place, viz., Cleire—and it was there that he performed his first miracle while yet but an infant—a crow flew over him in the air and descended and took up a small bird in its talons from its nest, in the presence of Ciaran, and flew away and tore it open. Ciaran took compassion on the little bird, and felt grieved at what occurred; but the crow flew back again and dropped the bird, torn and nearly dead, in his presence. Ciaran said to the bird “Arise, and be whole!” and the bird, by the grace of God, immediately arose and flew off to the nest again, quite sound.

Thirty years, or thereabouts, Ciaran spent in Ireland in the full enjoyment of bodily health before he was baptized; for all the Irish at this time were pagan, as I have already observed; yet, when the Holy

Ghost took his abode in his chosen servant Ciaran, he led a life of holiness and perfection in all his works during that time. But on learning of the spread of Christianity at Rome, he left Ireland, and proceeded thither, and was baptized there and instructed in the Catholic faith; and remained there for the term of twenty years, reading and studying the Holy Scriptures—collecting books, and storing his mind with the laws and rules of the Catholic Church. But when Ciaran's wisdom, chastity, devotion, and faith became manifest at Rome, he was accordingly ordained, and sent back to Ireland to preach the Gospel. On his way he met St. Patrick, Archbishop of Ireland; and as the holy men met together, they rejoiced exceedingly. St. Patrick was not bishop at this time, although he afterwards was; for it was Pope Celestine that ordained him Archbishop, and sent him to preach the Gospel to the Irish.

Although there were other saints in Ireland before St. Patrick's arrival, God reserved for him the archbishopric and conversion of the natives, as kings and chieftains did not receive the Christian faith from any other until his arrival. St. Patrick said to Ciaran: "Proceed before me to Ireland, and you will meet a well in a solitary spot in the central part of the country, and erect a monastery for yourself at that well. The name of that well is Uaran; and your name will be held in reverence there until the resurrection of the dead.

Ciaran replied, and said; "Tell me where is that well situated;" and St. Patrick said to him, "The Lord will guide thee; and take a very small bell with you, which will not ring until you reach the well, but when you do it will ring with a most charming and melodious sound, and thus shall you know this well; and in thirty years hence I will follow you to that place"—and they blessed and greeted each other, and Ciaran proceeded on his journey to Ireland, while St. Patrick remained in Italy. Ciaran's bell never rang until he arrived at the well which St. Patrick spoke of, viz., Uaran, and on landing in Ireland, the Lord directed his footsteps straight towards the well, and on reaching it the little bell rang quickly, with a most melodious clear sound. Barcon Ciaran was the name of the bell, and it is now deposited as a sacred relic in the parish and Cathedral of St. Ciaran, and taken round the country in order that contending kings and princes should be shown by it to keep fealty towards each other. It is also sworn on, when necessary, by the coarbhs of St. Ciaran's monastery before the public in general. It was made by Germanus, bishop, at St. Patrick's monastery, and it was he that gave it to St. Patrick.

This well, about which we have just spoken, is situated in a solitary district on the borders of Munster eastwards, and northwards of Leinster; yet it is in Munster that Eily lies, and it is there that Ciaran intended

first residing as a hermit, for the locality was surrounded by large woods at the time, and he contemplated erecting a small cell there, but afterwards a monastery, and finally, by God's grace, a cathedral, which is universally called Saighir Chiaran.

When Ciaran first arrived here he sat beneath the shade of a huge tree to shelter himself from the heat of the sun, and a ferocious wild boar bounded from the other side (of the tree), which, on seeing Ciaran, ran off, but returned again to Ciaran a meek and humble servant, being, by God's grace, brought to docility; and this wild boar was the first disciple and first monk that Ciaran had.

This boar went regularly to the woods and brought small timber, which he pulled with his tusks, to assist in building this cell. There was no one with Ciaran at the time, for it was unknown to his disciples that he came to this hermitage. Therefore, there came ferocious wild beasts from all parts of the desert to Ciaran, viz., the fox, the badger, the wolf, and the doe, and they were all subservient to Ciaran, and received his teachings as humble and contrite monks should do, and obeyed him in every way.

One day that the wild fox, who was lustful, cunning, wicked, and evilly-disposed by nature, met the saint's sandals and stole them, and immediately left the community and went towards his own den, where he began to eat the sandals. But on this being made known to Ciaran, he sent another of his monks—the badger, to bring back the fox; but on arriving at the fox's den he found him eating the sandals—for he had the latchets and fongs already gnawed off. The badger beseeched him to return to the monastery, and both came in the afternoon to St. Ciaran with the sandals.

"Brother," said Ciaran, addressing the fox, "Why didst thou commit this shameful theft, which is not becoming a Christian monk to do; for we have water here in abundance, and food also; and if your natural propensities overcame you, God would make flesh meat for you of the very bark of those trees which surround us. The fox then implored Ciaran to forgive him his sins, and begged to have penance imposed upon him, which was accordingly done, and the fox never after tasted food till he got leave from Ciaran to do so; and he then became pious like the rest of the animals ever after.

After this his own disciples, with a great many others, came to Ciaran, and he contemplated erecting a magnificent monastery; and the aforesaid animals remained in their natural shape ever after with Ciaran, and became his domestic servants, and he took great delight in them.

The Christian faith then began to spread rapidly, and on St. Patrick's arrival there were three holy bishops in Ireland, viz., Ailbhe of Emly Iubhair and Ibar, bishop, and Declan in his own land and country—the Decies of Munster; and the holy Ciaran converted many persons of his own

district or territory—and of the Ossorians in general to the Christian faith.

After this came the glorious archbishop—St. Patrick, from Pope Celestine—to Ireland, and all Ireland was full of the faith, and received Christian baptism at his hands.

A young lady came most opportune to Ciaran, and he converted her, and built her a neat little cell close to the monastery, and he invited other holy virgins to visit her, and amongst them was the ever-bashful virgin, Bruinneach, the daughter of a noble lord of Munster, and Ciaran's mother was very much attached to her—she being a foster child of hers, and was most amiable and accomplished in her manners. But as the Chieftain of the dal Fiachra heard of her extraordinary beauty, he came with a large body of kearnes, and took her away by force of arms. His name was Dima, and he kept her in his castle for a considerable time, and was very fond of her. Ciaran came to Dima and asked him to allow the lady to return home, but Dima would not allow her to leave himself, and said “that she should not go unless the screeching of the Heron awoke him in his bed the next morning.” It was then winter, and the ground was thickly covered with snow, except the spot on which Ciaran and his disciples resided.

On the following morning, although contrary to the bird's nature, a Heron screeched on the top of every house in the dun, and when Dima heard it he became greatly alarmed, and came in all haste to where Ciaran was and knelt down before him, and suffered the lady to return home; and he brought her to her own cell, which is now called Cill Laidhan (Killyon). Still Dima was very much attached to her, and became sorry for parting her so silly, and he came a second time to take her off by force; but God did not permit him, as it was the wish of Ciaran, his mother, and the lady herself; for at the moment Dima reached the village, Bruinneach swooned away and died, and Dima was sorry for that; and addressing Ciaran, said to him: “Why hast thou killed my wedded wife, and therefore you shall not dwell here, as I will expel you hence.”

Ciaran told him that that was not in his power to do of himself, but that God may permit him for a season to do evil, and therefore he would not depart for him, but would remain in spite of him.

As Dima heard this he departed in great rage, and determined to exterminate Ciaran; but the vengeance of heaven overtook himself for his evil doings, for on reaching his castle he found it on a blaze of fire, with all the out-houses; and he had a son of whom he was very fond, and in the confusion, caused by the fire, he was forgotten asleep in Dima's own bed; but his mother, seeing that there was no chance of

saving him, cried out in a loud voice, and said, "My beloved child, I bequeath thee to Ciaran of Saighir, and I leave you entirely in his hands; and when the house fell in, and the fire quenched, the infant was found unhurt and asleep. And as Dima saw this he went to where Ciaran and the Bishop Edus were, and he received absolution from Ciaran, and Dima presented him his two sons, viz., Donough (the infant which Ciaran saved from the fire), and another son, and their posterity ever after them, as also the monastery, rents, and emoluments arising from interments; and Dima returned to his own house in great joy, and he received many blessings from Ciaran.

Ciaran not wishing that his foster-sister should so soon depart the world, and knowing that Dima would not annoy him any further, proceeded to where her body was interred, and there prayed to the Lord for her recovery, and she immediately arose from death to life, and lived for a long time after.

On another occasion the servant which Ciaran had employed at the monastery came to him and said, "We want meat." Ciaran replied, "As the Lord has given us everything else he will also give us pigs," and there came on the following day a very large sow along with twelve others to the labourers employed there, and many pigs were bred of them.

On another occasion the same servant informed Ciaran that there were no sheep, and Ciaran said, "He that gave us swine will also give us sheep," and as the servant went outside the village he found twenty-eight white sheep grazing on the plain, and he brought them home, and many sheep were bred of them.

There was a very powerful man, whose name was Finntuoin, residing in the district, and he brought his son, who was dead, to Ciaran, in order to see if he could bring him to life. Laoghaire was the son's name, and as Ciaran prayed to the Lord for his recovery he arose from the dead and lived for a long time after; and that man presented to Ciaran at his death the land called Rath Finntuoin at this day.

When St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, came to Aengus Mac-Nadhfrach, King of Munster, who believed of God and in St. Patrick, by whom he was baptized, there came a man, the son of Erc, of the race of Duach, of the territory of Ossory, and maliciously killed St. Patrick's horse; but he was taken prisoner by the king's followers, and they bound him in fetters preparatory to his being put to death. But his relative implored Ciaran in his behalf, and he went to the king and gave him immense presents of gold and silver for his ransom, and therefore he was released and allowed to depart to his own county again; but after his departure the treasure which he gave the king melted away, which made the king very angry, and, calling Ciaran again, he asked him "why he gave him such

worthless commodity for the release of the prisoner?" Ciaran replied and said "that all the wealth of the world came from dust and would return to dust." On hearing this the King became furious and threatened Ciaran's life, but the vengeance of God fell upon himself, as he immediately became blind and fell upon the ground in the presence of Ciaran, who was standing by at the time.

A foster-brother (or disciple) of Ciaran's, named Carthach, and a relative of the king, implored Ciaran to restore his sight, and through the prayers of Ciaran and of those who were with him, the king recovered his sight, opened his eyes, and rose sound and whole, and many persons supposed the king to be dead, and that Ciaran restored him to life again; and they glorified God.

This king had some harpers at the time, whose strains were most enchanting and melodious, particularly when playing natural airs. And they were on a certain day travelling through the district called Musgraidhe Tire, in the province of Munster, and were murdered by an enemy, who lay in ambush for them, and who concealed the bodies of their murdered victims in a lake which lay near the plain wherein they were murdered, and hung their harps on a tree which grew on the edge of the lake. This grieved Aengus and made him frantic, because he did not know who the murderers were; but remembering Ciaran to be a holy man he came to inquire of him who killed the harpers, as he did not wish to inquire of his Druid on account of his becoming a Christian. Ciaran said to him: "Your harpers were treacherously murdered and their bodies are hid in a lake close to the place where the murder was committed, and their harps are hung upon a tree on the brow of the lake." And the king implored Ciaran to accompany him there, that he might be able to get the bodies, and they both proceeded to the lake, and Ciaran prayed and fasted, and as soon as his fast was over, the waters of the lake dried up so much that the bodies were visible, and they were taken up and brought into the presence of Ciaran, who again prayed to the Lord, and they were restored to life in the king's presence, and they looked as if they were only asleep.

They were eight in number, and were for a full month in the water; and they took their harps from the tree and played melodious and soul-stirring airs before the king and Ciaran, and all those assembled on the occasion; and the melody was so touching that numbers fell asleep, and praise and glorifications were offered to God and to Ciaran, and the lake is dried up since, but in commemoration of this miracle is called Loch-na-Geantraidhe, or "The harper's lake," to this day. And after blessing the king and the harpers Ciaran returned to his own home.

On another occasion the steward of Aengus (the king) was travelling through the same territory (Musgraidhe Tire), and he met a herd of pigs

and he directed his companions to kill one of them, and they did so, and brought it to be eaten to an adjoining wood, but the enemy met them in the wood and killed twenty of his men on the banks of the river called Broanach, and as soon as Ciaran heard of this he was implored by his foster-brother Carthach, who was either brother or grandson to King Aengus, and also by others, that they should proceed to where the dead bodies lay and have them buried immediately, in order that the wild beasts would not devour them. Ciaran said when they arrived where the bodies lay that there was not enough of men to bring them to the churchyard: and he spoke in a loud voice and said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, arise, ye poor people, and come along with me," and they all arose at once, and a wild boar arose with them; and a holy man of the district named Eochaidh returned to his own master; and those who were brought became holy monks and lived with Ciaran ever after.

Ciaran was travelling on another occasion, and he happened to pass through a plain where a large quantity of blackberries grew, and he said that these very berries would be required hereafter, and he covered them up in order that the coolness of the approaching winter would not injure them, as he knew that had they remained there for six months longer thus covered they would rather improve than wither.

On the occasion of a great banquet being given to Aengus, King of Munster, by one of his subjects, a chieftain whose name was Conchruidhe, King of Osraigh, the king and queen and a numerous retinue came to partake of the banquet: and this was at Easter, and the queen fell desperately in love with Conchruidhe at the dinner table, for he was a very handsome and well-featured man. But Conchruidhe would not yield to her solicitations, and the queen then feigned sickness in order that she could remain in the village with Conchruidhe after the king had left, and she said that she would recover if she got blackberries to eat, as she supposed they could not be found at that season.

Conchruidhe then became greatly alarmed through fear of the king on account of the queen remaining behind, and he immediately repaired to his patron St. Ciaran, and he told him the whole affair—for every plain in Osraigh belonged to Ciaran's parish—and as Ciaran heard this story he said that she should get blackberries to eat, and he proceeded direct to the place where he left them preserved the previous autumn, and he brought a cask full of them back, and sent them by Conchruidhe to the queen, and after she had eat of them she immediately recovered from her illness; for her temptation left her at once. The queen and those who eat of the berries imagined them as sweet as honey; but the queen thought it was a miracle that Ciaran wrought upon her, and she went to him and threw herself down upon her knees in his presence, con-

fessing her sins and begging forgiveness for the same ; and Ciaran prayed for her and blessed her and said, " I cannot save you from the death you were told would befall you, for the king himself will die on the same day in battle.

Eithne Vathach was the queen's name, and she was the daughter of Crimthan MacEaniea ; and Saint Patrick foretold their death, which Ciaran also predicted at the time. And it so happened, as Aengus and the queen fell in the battle of Cill Osraigh in Magh Fea, by the hands of Muirheartach, MacEanea, and Iollan MacDubhlaing, King of Leinster, and by the men of Leath Chuinn ; and the day on which that battle was fought was the 8th of the Ides of October, and St. Patrick died in the same year.

On another occasion St. Patrick and Aengus MacNadfraidh went with an immense multitude to Saighir, where Ciaran dwelt, and, besides the other food prepared for dinner, eight bullocks were killed for the occasion. Some one said to Ciaran, " What signifies this quantity of meat for such an immense number of guests ? " Ciaran replied, " He who fed thousands in the wilderness on a few loaves of bread, and a few small fishes will also feed those men ; " and he blessed his own well and turned it into wine, and, though immense the multitude assembled, it happened by the grace of God and Ciaran that they had plenty of food and drink.

On another occasion the King of Tara and a large number of followers went to take hostages of spoils from the Mummonians ; but Oiliol, King of Cashel, would not submit, but prepared for action all his troops to meet him in battle, and both kings, with their armies, met near Ciaran's citadel ; and Ciaran endeavoured to conciliate them, but they would not be reconciled. But he received from God what he could not obtain from proud and haughty man. A large wood immediately grew up in front of the Mummonians when going to fight, and the water of the river Brosna overflowed its banks in front of the Meath men, so that they dared not cross, and as soon as both armies saw these miracles they became terribly afraid, and the King of Meath turned his back to the stream and returned home on seeing the small rivulet that was fordable a few moments previous swollen to such an alarming extent.

The Mummonians remained for the night in the vicinity of Ciaran's residence ; and Ciaran prepared a pig and a cow for the king's dinner, and he satisfied him and his army in that meal, and there was some left, and they glorified God and Ciaran for his marvellous miracle.

At another time haughty kearnes made incursions into Munster, and commenced depredations by taking cattle and murdering the inhabitants. But a great man, a native of Munster, whose name was Longan, pursued the kearnes and overtook them, and put them to flight ; but

seeing no hope of escaping they implored Ciaran to save them from their perilous position ; and when Longan and his followers thought it was time to murder them, a flash of lightning fell between him and the spoilers, which greatly terrified Longan and his followers, who gave up any further pursuit, but returned home to his own habitation ; and the robbers knew that they escaped through the miraculous interposition of Ciaran, and they submitted to him and related all that had occurred, and resolved on becoming monks and serving God and Ciaran, and leading a holy life for the rest of their days. And they lived with Ciaran, performing pious and holy works ever after.

On another occasion a thief from Leinster stole a very fine cow, which belonged to Ciaran's community or monks. His name was Cairbre ; but on his way to Sliabh Bladhma, where he was taking the cow, he was so enveloped in a cloud of mist and darkness, that he could not make his way, but fell into the river and was drowned, and the cow came back again to Ciaran and his monks.

On another occasion Ciaran sent a yoke of oxen to St. Coinche to plough her lands, and she knew that it was Ciaran that sent them, and the distance was very long between the Cathedral of St. Ciaran and the Monastery of St. Coinche, which is situated at Ross Beanchor, on the sea coast, in the south of Ireland ; and the oxen ploughed of themselves, and when spring was over they returned home to Ciaran without any one to lead them on.

Ciaran was in the habit of administering the Holy Communion on every Christmas Eve to his own community at Saighir by his own hands, and also of visiting the monastery of his mother at Ross Beanchor, in order that at his own hands she would receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the sacrament, and return to his own monastery on the same evening. We are to infer from this that it was God that performed this miracle, as he did with Habcock, when he brought him from India to his own country and back again in a few moments.

St. Coinche was in the habit of praying to the Lord on her knees, on a huge rock near the sea-coast, a short distance from her monastery—and the rock's name now is Carrig Conchie, and the tide occasionally surrounded it ; but Ciaran went one day to the rock, and it floated on the waters with him and returned to its own site again when it was Ciaran's wish that it should do so. We are not astonished at this, when it is written —“*Mirabilis Deus in Sanctus Sui.*” Psalm 135.

Ciaran's foster-brother, of whom we have already spoken, viz., Carthach, and a young lady of Ciaran's community, whose name was Laidan, fell deeply in love with each other, and evil thoughts polluted their minds : so much so that they made an appointment in order to embrace

each other, . . . but on arriving at the appointed hour and place, . . . a flash of lightning fell between them, and they narrowly escaped being burned, and they became so terrified that they could not utter a single word, and they returned home. The virgin became blind while she lived, which was not too severe a punishment for a woman that would pollute her own soul with sin, to be deprived of the light of this world. Carthach immediately got penitent, and became a pilgrim. Ciaran's sanctity was manifested in this miracle, as God was not willing to allow these two youths who were under his care to commit sin; for Ciaran was truly exemplary in watching over his flock.

Two brothers, whose names were Odhran and Meadhran, from the town of Lathrach, in Musgraidhe Tire, came to Ciaran to consult him and ask his advice as to whether they would become pilgrims and travel into foreign lands, and on arriving at Saighir one of them expressed a wish for remaining with Ciaran himself. This man was Meadhran, and Odhran said to him, "Brother! this was not what you promised me," and he implored Ciaran not to retain his brother. Ciaran said, "God will decide between us as to who shall have him. Let him take this torch in his hand and breathe upon it, and if it lights he shall remain with me, but if not he may go with you." He then took the torch in his hand and breathed upon it, and the torch lit immediately, and he remained with Ciaran ever after, led a holy life, and performed works of charity. Ciaran spoke to Odhran and said, "I say unto you, Odhran, that had you travelled the world all over it is in your native village you shall die, and therefore return home and live there, as it is after you the place will be named for ever." Odhran returned to his own place, built a magnificent monastery, led a virtuous and holy life, and wrought many miracles. We read in his life that he ascended into heaven, and Ciaran's words were literally fulfilled, as the place is ever since called "Lathrach Odhran."

A female named Eitile was travelling on one occasion and she fell and broke her bones and died of the hurt, but Ciaran restored her to life in three days, and she bestowed on Ciaran the lands on which she got the fall, which are now called Leim Eitile, and she thanked God and Ciaran.

A servant belonging to the king, whose name was Ceanfaladh, murdered Croman in a field of Ciaran's, and Ciaran restored him to life in seven days in Christ's name; and on his being brought to life, Ciaran said, in the presence of the people: "He that murdered you illegally, *i.e.* Ceanfaladh shall soon be murdered himself, and his body burned in the castle called Rathundy, in Eileach.

On another occasion Oiliol, King of Munster, addressed Ciaran in brutal language, and left him in great anger, but it was not long

after till the king became dumb, being for eight days unable to utter a word. He came to Ciaran and prostrated himself before him—repented and asked forgiveness, and when Ciaran saw that he was truly penitent he blessed his tongue, and the king spoke immediately in a clear voice on receiving Ciaran's blessing; and he went home glorifying God and Ciaran.

Ciaran and a hermit, whose name was Geaman, went one night to bathe in a stream of cold water, and when some time in the water Geaman said to Ciaran, "I cannot bear remaining any longer in the water," but devotion moved them like heat in a bath, and both began to praise God. Ciaran said to Geaman: "A beloved friend shall visit us tomorrow, *i.e.* Carthach, son of the King of Munster, and my own foster-brother, whom I sent on a pilgrimage on account of a sin which he contemplated, had not God and I prevented him; for I did not like to see his piety and devotion destroyed. He is now reformed, has received absolution for his sins, and is cleansed from his transgressions. Take you this fish hovering about here for the sake of our dearly beloved son." And Geaman took the fish as he was told by Ciaran, and on the next day Carthach came as Ciaran promised.

At another time Ciaran of Clonmacnoise was taken prisoner by the king, whose name was Faruidhe, and put into fetters, and the cause of this was, that the riches of the king were deposited for safety with Ciaran, who, being a good and holy man and full of mercy, distributed a large portion of them among the poor.

On another occasion the king came to Ciaran and spoke to him jestingly, and said—"If I get four red cows and that you put white heads on them I will set you free." Ciaran said, "God can perform this, and allow me to go and seek out the cattle, and if I don't find them I shall return to you again."

Ciaran was allowed to go, and he came to Saighir, where the other Ciaran lived, and he told him his story; and at that time the two Brendains were on a visit with Ciaran, and they were glad of Ciaran of Cluain's arrival, and Ciaran's servant said to him that he had no food to eat but meat, and Ciaran said, "Prepare whatever you have quickly," and when the meat was boiled Ciaran blessed it, and it changed in their presence into oil, fish, and porridge, and other delicacies according as he wished it, and it happened by God's grace that all the vessels in the house were filled with highly-flavoured wines for the saints' dinner.

There was a monk in the house who was not willing to dine with the saints, *viz.*, MacCongan, and he said that he would not partake of the food which was made from the meat, and Ciaran said to him "You will eat meat in Lent, and your enemies will murder you on the very day you eat it, and they will take off your head, and you shall not inherit

the kingdom of heaven, and your days shall be spent in misery, and you will resign the order of the monk; and Ciaran's words turned out true for he was murdered very near Saighir Ciaran.

It was at this time that these four holy men, viz., the two Ciarans and the two Brendains, made a covenant amongst themselves and their Coarbhs after them, and on Ciaran taking his leave and receiving the blessing of the other holy men, yet, not knowing where to find the cows he promised the king, and Ciaran of Saighir accompanied him part of the way to direct him, and on parting they blessed each other. Ciaran of Cluain said, "Let the result of my blessing be riches and much treasures and wealth in your village for ever;" and Ciaran of Saighir said, "Let virtue, wisdom, and piety through my blessing dwell upon your habitation for ever," and those words turned out true to both parties, and on arriving at the ford called "Ath Sallagh" they found on the banks of the river four bald white-headed cows. Ciaran of Cluain said, "Do you see how God hath given us the four cows which the king demanded," and they then separated after giving thanks and praise to God, and blessing and kissing one another as a token of grace and peace. And Ciaran came to Saighir and the other Ciaran went to Clonmacnoise and sent the cows to the king, who was astonished how such cattle could be found, and on Ciaran making good his promise the cows disappeared, and no tidings of them could be obtained, and the king saw that he dealt unjustly with Ciaran.

There was in the monastery of Clonmacnoise a child, whose name was Cuthid, who was reluctant and lazy in performing good works, but ready and willing in doing evil things, and he came to Saighir Ciaran, and remained there some time with the elder Ciaran, and Ciaran commanded that the holy fire which he blessed the previous Easter should not be quenched for a full year in the monastery, but kept lit, and the child of whom we have already spoken, instigated by the devil, came of his own accord and put out the fire; and Ciaran said to the people, "Are you aware that this wicked child, whose name is Cuthid of Cluain, extinguished the blessed fire we had lit, and he will be avenged for it, for he shall die on to-morrow," and this turned out true, as he was torn by wolves on the following day on the lands outside the place. Ciaran said, "There shall be no fire in this church till Easter unless God send it."

Ciaran of Cluain Mac Nois heard of the child's death, and he came in all haste to Saighir, and he was received with great honours there, but there was no fire in the monastery, as it was by this holy fire that the fire of the monastery was every night lit, and Ciaran said "that there should be no fire in the monastery till Easter if God did not send it from heaven, and there came on that day to the village Ciaran of Cluain and his followers, and they were very cold, for it was snowy weather, and Ciaran the

elder went out, and lifted his hands in prayer to the Almighty and a flash of fire fell into his bosom, and the corner of his mantle became ignited, and he brought it to the house where the guests were, and when they got warm supper was prepared, and when they sat down to partake of it Ciaran of Cluain Mac Nois said that he would not eat till the child was returned to life again. Ciaran the elder then said, "We know this to be your wish and God will restore him to life again for your sake, and the child did recover at the words of Ciaran, and as they saw this they praised and thanked God for his mercies and took their supper, and Ciaran of Clonmacnoise took the child with him to Cluain after being blessed by Ciaran the elder.

On another occasion a brother of one of Ciaran's monks, whose name was "Baton," accidentally extinguished the fire, but he did penance and received absolution; and on that day St. Ruadhan of Lothra came on a visit to Ciaran, and there was no fire before him in the monastery, and Ciaran went to a rock that was at hand and blessed it, and the rock lit up at once, and Ciaran took the rock in his hands and brought it lit to the house where the visitors were, and as Ruadhan saw it they glorified and praised God and Ciaran. The brother we have just mentioned, viz., "Baton," on another occasion spilled a vessel of milk which he was bringing about; but Ciaran made the sign of the cross on the vessel and it became full again; and the brother who spilled it and the rest of the brethren became alarmed or got afraid of their master Ciaran, and they became firm in the faith and performed good works ever after.

Ciaran was on a certain day praying to the Lord and an angel appeared unto him, and said that the hour of his death was at hand, and he asked three requests of God through the angel, and the angel granted him what he wished. The first was that every one who was buried in his church and cathedral the gates of hell should be closed against him on the day of judgment. The second request was that whoever would keep holy his own day would not want the riches of this world nor the kingdom of heaven after death. The third request was that the tribe which he belonged to—that is the Ossorians, and to whom he was patron—should never be vanquished in battle by a strange tribe if they came unjustly to invade their territory, but that they were not to make unjust incursions among other tribes.

This holy man of whom we have just spoken, viz., Ciaran of Saighir, great was his humility in all things, and he delighted in reading and hearing the Holy Scriptures read, and he read and studied them till the hour of his death. It is related of him that in his lifetime he and the other Irish saints were educated by Finian of Cluain Iraird, and that he learned wisdom and divinity unsurpassable in that school, and that he was

named the *pet* or foster-child of St. Finian, as were also the other Irish saints called, and on being in his old age possessed of great wisdom and learning, as we have already said, and as a revered bishop, his anxiety was chiefly to instruct others by teaching love, obedience, and wisdom.

Ciaran, from his youth until his death, never tasted strong drink, nor did he wear warm or fine clothing, nor did he indulge in feasts or sleep much.

He converted his own tribe, viz., the Ossorians, to the Christian faith, and many more besides them; and he was after visited by angels and a large number of bishops and priests and the other orders of the church; and an angel built a holy well for him, in which many diseases and infirmities are cured by its waters, and its name is Ciaran's well.

Thirty years Ciaran spent in the service of God before he was baptized, and on getting infirm by sickness and old age, he saw the hour of his death approaching, and he collected his flock and parishioners from all quarters around him, and he blessed them and exhorted them to keep holy the Commandments of God; and he then received the Holy Sacrament in the presence of a choir of holy men on the 3rd of the nones of the month of March, in peace with God, and he dismissed his people, and there were thirty bishops who were consecrated by his own hands, with God's permission, accompanying him that very night to heaven.

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